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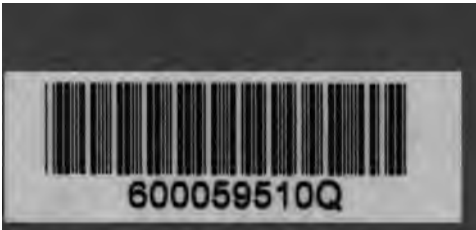
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MEMOIRS

OF

HENRY LENOX.

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OF

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OF

HENRY LENOX,

INTERSPERSED WITH

LEGENDARY ROMANCES.

By the Hon. MISS LENOX.

LONDON:

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MEMOIRS,

&c. &c.

CHAP. I.

True I've lov'd thee, dearly lov'd thee,
Thro' an age of worldly woe;
How ungrateful I have prov'd thee,
Let my mournful exit ſhew.

THE retribution of virtue or vice does not always follow on this ſide of eternity. If the wiſe diſpenſations of omnificient Providence exceed the comprehenſion of human weakneſs, let us not

impiouſly arraign the regulations of that Being whoſe ways are juſt as they are inſcrutable.—While we ſuffer from thoſe misfortunes to which our own imprudence or the viciſſitudes of unſtable mortality ſubject us, let us humble our hearts to Him before whom the evaneſcent ſhadows of beauty, grandeur, and power are equally trivial, and acknowledge the truth of theſe aſſertions, while we peruſe the following eventful ſtory:

Henry was ſon to the Rev. Lionel Lenox: ſcarcely had the firſt dawn of reaſon beamed over his infant mind, when the ſorrows of a beloved parent led the way to his own. His mother, the only child of General Cleveland, had irreconcilably offended her father, by a private marriage with Lenox, who, after

after ſeveral fruitleſs attempts to conciliate the exaſperated ſpirit of his father-in-law, retired from town with his young and lovely wife to a ſmall paternal eſtate which he poſſeſſed in Yorkſhire, that was rendered peculiarly agreeable by its contiguity to the extenſive demeſne and ſplendid manſion of the Honourable Mr. Fitz-horton; the latter was about thirty years of age, elegant in perſon, inſinuating in his manners, and remarkable for his hoſpitality and affable demeanour.

Such was his wordly character, but different, very different were his real principles. Hackneyed in the paths of ſeduction and vice, he conſidered religion with contempt, although he ſometimes yielded to its external forms; he

was ever ready to puniſh rigorouſly the culprit who was caught ſhooting a bird on his demeſne, although two acquaintances had fallen by his hand in that licenſed murder, duelling.

During Mr. Lenox's reſidence at Oatlands, Fitz-horton had always diſtinguiſhed him with the moſt attentive politeneſs; and on Mrs. Lenox's preſenting her huſband with a ſon, offered himſelf as ſponſor, which was gratefully accepted. Fitz-horton's frequent viſits to Oatlands, under pretence of viſiting his god-ſon, at length began to be noticed through the neighbourhood, but the general eſteem which Mrs. Lenox juſtly claimed at that period, prevented any credit to be attached to theſe reports.

One

One day Lenox, having buſineſs to tranſact with a gentleman who lived ſome miles diſtant, rode out, but not finding him at home, returned earlier than he intended; as he came ſlowly up the little avenue which led to his houſe, he was ſurpriſed to ſee Fitz-horton hurrying through the garden, and, climbing over the wall, walk haſtily towards his own park; a momentary ſuſpicion aroſe in his mind at a circumſtance ſo unexpected, but ſuſpicion is never the welcome inmate of a candid heart, and Lenox haſtily baniſhed the painful intruder. On entering the parlour he beheld his wife ſeated on a ſofa with little Henry by her ſide; her eyes ſeemed red and ſwoln with weeping. Every veſtige of unkindneſs died in his boſom at the ſight:

MEMOIRS

OF

HENRY LENOX.

Clara. To ſleep he found was impoſſible, and after a night of racking uncertainty, he, at five o'clock the next morning, ſet out for York.

On his arrival he immediately went to the houſe of Miſs Byron; that lady was from home, and the footman from whom he inquired informed him that he had ſeen Mrs. Lenox, accompanied by Mr. Fitz-horton, in a chaiſe and four, which drove furiouſly up the London road. Here all hope was baniſhed, and uncertainty gave place to the moſt horrid truth: fatigue, want of reſt, and agony of mind had ſo enfeebled him, that on receiving this account, a faintiſh ſickneſs for a few minutes deprived him of all ſenſation; his firſt intention, on arouſing himſelf from this ſhock, was immediately

to purſue the fugitives, but his horſe was diſabled by the violence with which he rode, and in his confuſion he forgot his purſe: as he had no acquaintance in town from whom he might borrow a ſufficient ſum, he was forced to return home. He had ſcarcely entered his houſe when a feveriſh heat forced him to retire to bed; in a few hours his indiſpoſition increaſed to ſo alarming a height, that a phyſician was ſent for, who pronounced him in a high fever. For ſeven weeks life ſeemed to flutter in the laſt departing throb, but a conſtitution naturally ſtrong overcame the complaint, and Lenox was reſtored to anguiſh and to life.

His firſt care, on recovering, was to diſpoſe of Oatlands, and to retire with

with his little Henry to a ſmall living which he poſſeſſed in Cumberland, where in the duties of his profeſſion, and the education of his child, he endeavoured to alleviate that grief which time could ſcarcely eradicate.

CHAP. II.

Fear no more the heat o' th' sun,
Nor the furious winter's rages;
Thou thy worldly task hast done,
Home art gone and ta'en thy wages.
Fear no more the lightnings flash,
Nor th' all-dreaded thunder stone;
Fear no slander, censure rash,
Thou hast finish'd joy and moan:

SHAKESPEARE.

SEVENTEEN years had now elapsed since Lenox's retirement, unmarked by any particular circumstance, except an authentic account given in the newspapers of Fitz-horton's assassination at Florence. During this period the improvement of Henry

Henry was conſiderable, his perſon was light and graceful, his face intereſting and expreſſive. In the cultivation of his mind, his father was particularly careful that he ſhould be diveſted of the formal ſtiffneſs which too often attends claſſical education, by giving him a taſte for the lighter branches of Belles Lettres.

The eldeſt ſon of a baronet, who was on a ſhooting party in the neighbourhood of Seldon (the parſonage of Lenox), chanced to form an acquaintance with Henry, and was ſo pleaſed with his ſociety that he gave him a preſſing invitation to ſpend the enſuing Chriſtmas at Barham Caſtle, the ſeat of his father, which Henry, with his indulgent parent's permiſſion, accepted; and on the following week, he, in company with his young

young friend, arrived at the elegant ſeat of Sir William Barham, where, in the kindneſs of his reception and the feſtivities of the ſeaſon, every melancholy reflection was baniſhed from his youthful heart: a fortnight on wings of down had elapſed when Henry received a letter from his father, ſtating that ſome diſagreeable reports in the newſpapers relative to the failure of a commercial houſe in which all his money was lodged, obliged him to go to London immediately; the letter concluded with the following paragraph:

"To me, my Henry, inſulated from "ſociety, and equally regardleſs of its "joys and pleaſures, this information "would have been immaterial; but it is "for you, my child, that all my uneaſi-

"neſs

" neſs ariſes: for your ſake I am again
" preparing to reviſit ſcenes, whoſe re-
" membrance will coſt me many a pang
" —but memory was given me for a
" bleſſing, and it is the imbecility of my
" own mind which changes it into bit-
" terneſs. Surrounded as you at pre-
" ſent are, with ſcenes to which you have
" hitherto been a ſtranger, it is neceſſary
" for you to aſſume a circumſpection
" both prudent and unaffected, and that
" the watchful arm of Providence may
" ever be extended over you, my only
" ſource of happineſs, is the prayer of
" your fond father,

" LIONEL LENOX."

The melancholy tenor of this letter threw a gloom over Henry's ſpirits, which was, however, ſoon diſpelled by that warmth

warmth of youthful fancy that always hopes the beſt, and the polite attention of his new friends, who inſiſted on his remaining till the return of his father: for the five enſuing weeks he received no other letter; doubt and uncertainty tormented him at a ſilence ſo unuſual; and, as a French writer juſtly obſerves, that uncertainty magnified of every evil. A packet at length arrived, the ſuperſcription was in the hand-writing of Lenox. Henry eagerly breaking the ſeal, read as follows:—

" My deareſt Henry,

" When I laſt wrote to you, I " thought that my withered heart, long " habituated to misfortunes, was in ſome " meaſure deadened to the acute ſenſa- " tions of ſorrow—but I deceived my- " ſelf.

" ſelf. I will, however, ſtrive to give
" you a methodical account of what
" has happened ſince my arrival in
" London:—On viſiting the houſe of
" Meſſrs. —— I found that a ſtatute of
" bankruptcy had been actually taken out
" againſt them, and that my money was
" irretrievably loſt. As I was returning
" a few days after to my lodging, I ob-
" ſerved a croud collected round the
" door of a wretched looking houſe,
" which I found, on enquiry, was cauſed
" by the fainting of a poor woman that a
" bailiff was dragging to priſon for debt;
" I ſtept into the ſhop to inquire the ex-
" tent of the ſum; ſhe was ſtill inſen-
" ble: her clothes bore the appearance
" of former gentility, and wretchedneſs
" was legibly written on her emaciated
" countenance. On recovering, ſhe ad-
" dreſſed

" dreſſed the harpy who ſupported her
" with the moſt ſupplicating entreaty:
" that voice aroufed every dormant fa-
" culty of recollection—Oh, Henry, it
" was your mother!!—A tranſitory hec-
" tic that paſſed over her cheek as ſhe
" gazed on me, ſhewed that ſhe recol-
" lected me.—Having diſcharged the
" debt, I conducted her to my lodgings
" in a hackney coach. A lethargic ſtu-
" por overwhelmed her, and on entering
" the room ſhe tottered to a chair, on
" which ſhe ſunk and remained almoſt
" motionleſs; deſpair ſeemed to have ab-
" ſorbed every vital ſenſation.

" Notwithſtanding my ſoothing and
" entreaty, ſhe continued in this ſtate till
" the evening, when ſhe was ſeized with
" ſtrong convulſions, which in ſpite of
" the efforts of a ſkilful phyſician, conti-
" nued

" nued until the middle of the next day.
" The violence of the complaint had ſo
" enfeebled her that the phyſician pro-
" nounced it impoſſible that ſhe could
" ſurvive three days. When the con-
" vulſions ceaſed, ſhe ſeemed ſenſible of
" her approaching diſſolution, and for
" the firſt time ſince our meeting, ſpoke
" to me, on being aſſured that you were
" ſtill living. 'I have written (ſaid ſhe)
" for his peruſal, a journal of the events
" that have befallen me ſince I laſt ſaw
" him. I ſhall now add to it a few lines;
" it is the laſt ſad comfort that I can feel;
" that my child, in peruſing the errors of
" his parent, may from them learn not to
" ſwerve from the path of rectitude, and
" own, while he drops a tear to my me-
" mory, that mine were the indiſcretions of
" weakneſs, and not the vices of habitual
" depravity.' Having ſent for the trunk

" which

" which contained the manuſcript, ſhe
" was engaged for ſome time in writing,
" after which ſhe ſolemnly charged me to
" deliver it, with her parting bleſſing, to
" you: ſhe ſunk back exhauſted with
" theſe exertions, and in two hours after,
" her repentant ſpirit flew to the awful
" preſence of her Creator—Merciful
" powers, do I live to tell it, after finding
" my ſoul's firſt darling waſhed white as
" ſnow by penitence and ſorrow, and
" fondly hoping that happineſs might ſtill
" be for me,—to receive only her part-
" ing breath, to witneſs only the ſilent
" anguiſh of her contrition; but Provi-
" dence is ever juſt, and to its diſpenſa-
" tions I humbly ſubmit.—While I bent
" over the pale corpſe, not a ſigh heaved
" my boſom, not a tear came to my re-
" lief—mine was mute unutterable woe.

" From

" From this ſituation I was taken by the
" kind Dr. Barlow, who inſiſted on my
" taking a ſtrong opiate. Late the next
" morning I awoke ſomewhat refreſhed,
" and on the following Monday com-
" menced my journey to Seldon, whither
" I have arrived with the faded relics of
" my once lovely Clara. As I knew, my
" child, the inutility of increaſing your
" affliction, by ſummoning you to the
" burial, I had the body interred under
" the old cypreſs, near that ſpot in the
" church-yard where you, when a child,
" ſo often ſat, and wept over the grave of
" your play-fellow Charles Melvin. I
" have written to your grandfather, Ge-
" neral Cleveland, who has arrived from
" India, but have received no anſwer. I
" feel myſelf unwell, and wiſh to ſee you
" immediately. Should I not ſurvive,
" however,

" however, to breathe a laſt benediction
" over you, *Remember*, that he who 'tem-
" pers the wind to the ſhorn lamb,' is
" ſufficient to make ſmooth the rugged
" path of life for you, as long as you con-
" tinue to deſerve His protection. Pre-
" ſerve inviolably thoſe principles of
" Chriſtianity which I have endeavoured
" to inſtil into your youthful mind; 'tis
" theſe alone will make you rejoice when
" the vaſt fabric of the world ſhall crum-
" ble into diſſolution, and time itſelf ſink
" into the boſom of eternity. That every
" bleſſing may attend you, my Henry, is
" the prayer of your affectionate parent,

"LIONEL LENOX."

CHAP. III.

Oh may I readily learn this important leſſon of morality, that my own turn is haſtening too; ſuch a little hillock ſhall ſhortly ariſe for me in ſome unknown ſpot of ground; it ſhall cover this fleſh, and theſe bones of mine in darkneſs, and ſhall hide them from the light of the ſun, and from the ſight of man, 'till the heavens ſhall be no more.

WATTS.

HENRY, during the peruſal of this letter, was agitated with the moſt painful emotions. Tears rolled in quick ſucceſſion down his cheeks as he read the account of his mother's death; but on coming to the paſſage in which his father mentioned

mentioned his own illneſs, he immediately prepared to ſet out for Seldon, altho' it was forty miles diſtant, and the night dark and lowering. Having haſtily apologiſed to the amiable family at Barham Caſtle for the fatal neceſſity of his ſudden departure, he, with a heart weighed down by the moſt melancholy preſages, commenced his journey. About the middle of the next day he came within ſight of the Parſonage. As he rode up the winding lane that led to his paternal reſidence, how different was his ſtate of mind when compared to the time he laſt travelled that road: gay hope and joy then danced through his youthful blood, and phantoms of future happineſs floated in his delighted imagination. Now, fear and diſmay oppreſſed him, and caſt an additional gloom on the leafleſs ſterility of

the ſurrounding ſcenery. On entering the houſe he was met by an old domeſtic. "How is my father, William?" eagerly demanded he. "Very ill, my dear Maſter Henry," replied the man, "but I truſt he will be better ſince you are come; he has been anxious for your arrival."—On entering his father's chamber, he was ſhocked at the ravages which confinement, ſickneſs and ſorrow, had wrought in his countenance. Feigning, however, a compoſure which belied the anguiſh of his heart, he, after ſome tender inquiries, ſeated himſelf by the bed-ſide. "Henry," ſaid Lenox faintly, "I feel that my vital ſpark is almoſt extinct. I once hoped, that when I ſhould receive this final ſummons of fate, it would have been in my power to leave you a competence; it has happened otherwiſe:

I can leave you nothing. I have received no anſwer from your grandfather; but as he will ſoon be your only relative, it is my wiſh that you ſhould ſeek his protection; if you fail of ſucceſs, He who is a father to the fatherleſs will, I truſt, never ſuffer you to want." Here Lenox ſunk, exhauſted, on his pillow, and Henry, unable to ſubdue his tears, retired. When he next returned to his father's room, he found him ſunk in a profound ſleep. "It will, I hope, be of ſervice," ſaid he, turning to the phyſician. "I fear the contrary, Mr. Lenox," ſaid the latter. The prediction was unfortunately true. In a few hours after, Lenox breathed his laſt. To deſcribe the grief of Henry would be impoſſible. To thoſe alone, in a ſimilar ſituation, they could be known. For although mirth

may impart its playful hilarity to many a heart, or ſorrow extract a tear from the eye of pity, agonies of ſoul are ever incommunicable. Lenox was, by his own requeſt, buried by the ſide of his Clara; and Henry, after the laſt ſad obſequies, proceeded to examine the manuſcript of his mother, which began as follows:

MANUSCRIPT.

" To you, my child, offspring of my " days of innocence and virtue, are the " following lines addreſſed, to warn your " ſtill unadulterated heart againſt the " dreadful conſequences which ever at- " tend the obedience of irregular paſſion, " 'Tis uſeleſs to pain you with an account " of the ſeductive ſcheme which the infa-

" mous

" mous Fitz-horton too ſucceſsfully
" practiſed againſt me; let it ſuffice to tell
" you, that we proceeded to Florence,
" where, by a ſplendid retinue and
" magnificent eſtabliſhment, he endea-
" voured to baniſh the corroding anxiety
" which a heart ſo ill at eaſe as mine
" muſt ever feel. For a year he con-
" tinued, by the moſt unremitting kind-
" neſs, to ſoothe and divert the melan-
" choly, which, ſpite of every effort,
" oppreſſed me. From that period,
" however, a viſible alteration took
" place in his behaviour: he removed
" me from our ſpacious hotel to a more
" retired lodging; was frequently ab-
" ſent, and on his return would treat me
" with the moſt ſtudied indifference.
" Many were the hours of poignant re-
" morſe which this conduct cauſed me.

" But I was the guilty author of my own
" ſorrows, and I drank the bitter cup of
" repentance in ſilence. The Carnival
" was approaching; multitudes flocked
" to the city, to partake of the varied
" amuſements which this feſtive ſcene
" afforded to all ranks of people: muſic
" reſounded through every ſtreet; pom-
" pous proceſſions enlivened the con-
" vent's dull monotony, and joy ſeemed
" to illuminate each face. As the ſtate
" of my mind was too unhappy to derive
" any relief from this promiſcuous revel-
" ry, I determined to remain entirely at
" home during the feſtival. One even-
" ing, while I was ſitting at the balcony
" of a front window, viewing the groups
" of maſkers that were paſſing gaily
" along, and depreſſed with the com-
" parative wretchedneſs of my own con-
" dition,

" dition, Madame Velorno (my hoſteſs)
" entered. 'How can you endure,' ſaid
" ſhe, to be thus ſecluded, when every
" perſon is enjoying the pleaſures of the
" Carnival.' 'I am not well,' I replied,
" 'and do not wiſh to go into public.'——
" 'Amuſement is the beſt remedy for one
" ſo young and handſome; and as the
" Signor mentioned on his departure,
" that he would not be home for a few
" days, you had better come with me to
" the public rooms to-night; I can pro-
" vide you a domino, if you don't chooſe
" to go in character, and we ſhall retire
" early.' I at length conſented to ac-
" company her, more from a wiſh to ob-
" tain ſome temporary ſuſpenſion of my
" own reflections, than from any mo-
" tives of amuſement. On entering the
" rooms, I was ſtruck with the brilliancy

" of their ornaments, and the crowd of
" maſkers, whoſe rich and fantaſtic ha-
" bits added ſo much to the novelty of
" the ſcene. After taking a few turns
" round the apartments, Madame Ve-
" lorno having met an acquaintance, we
" retired to a diſtant corner, and were
" engaged in a deſultory converſation,
" when we were joined by a young man,
" habited as a Mercury; he was un-
" maſked, his face was uncommonly
" handſome, and his whole contour pre-
" poſſeſſing. He ſeated himſelf beſide
" me, and began to converſe with that
" agreeable eaſe which generally diſtin-
" guiſhes a well-bred perſon. While
" we were thus employed, a beautiful fi-
" gure entered, habited as a Pomona.
" She was followed by a train of Arca-
" dians, amongſt whom I thought I ob-

" ſerved

" ſerved one whoſe exterior ſtrongly re-
" ſembled Fitz-horton. ' That beautiful
" creature,' ſaid Madame Velorno's ac-
" quaintance ' is Azolina Di Guidova,
" an heireſs of the illuſtrious houſe of that
" name; ſhe is ſhortly to be eſpouſed to
" the Engliſh Chevalier Fitz-horton,
" who accompanies her. Nothing de-
" lays the ceremony, but a miſtreſs,
" whom he has at length conſented to
" part with; and———' I could hear
" no more—my ſenſes forſook me, and
" I fell motionleſs on the floor. On
" my recovering, I found myſelf ſuppor-
" ted by the young gentleman, who was
" gazing earneſtly on my face, which had
" been unmaſked to give me air. When
" I was ſufficiently able to walk, I en-
" treated Madame Velorno to return,
" pretending that the heat of the room

" the ſharp ſting of adverſity, and inno-
" cence ſuffer from deceit and hypocri-
" ſy; but what are the dignified ſorrows
" of virtue to the agonies of conſcious
" gilt? The whole of the next day I
" paſſed in hourly expectation of re-
" ceiving the mandate from Fitz-horton
" which was to turn me forlorn on that
" world, from whoſe joys and comforts
" he had for ever torn me. I ſummoned
" preſence of mind ſufficient to acquaint
" Madame Velorno with my ſtory, only
" ſuppreſſing my marriage with your
" father; this I could not mention; my
" mind, diveſted of thoſe paſſions which
" once blinded my reaſon, now ſhrunk
" with the retroſpection of its own baſe-
" neſs. She received the intelligence
" with more pity than indignation, and in
" compaſſionating my misfortune, forgot
" my

" my errors. On the night of the ſe-
" cond day, finding myſelf fatigued from
" want of reſt, I had retired to my cham-
" ber, when I was ſuddenly arouſed by
" an unuſual noiſe in the long gallery
" which ſeparated the apartments:—The
" tumult ſtill increaſing, I opened the
" door, and beheld Fitz-horton ghaſtly
" and ſmeared with blood, ſupported by
" two men who were conducting him to
" his room. * * * * *
* * * * * * * *

" A phyſician was immediately ſent for,
" but no relief could be extended to the
" wretched ſufferer, who, after lingering
" the whole of the night in ſpeechleſs
" agony, expired.

" Thus died Fitz-horton, the original
" cauſe of my ſhame and ſubſequent
" misfor-

" misfortunes, cut off in the full glow
" of health, and hurried into the awful
" preſence of his Creator to account for
" the numerous errors of an ill-ſpent
" life. The only account which I could
" collect of this ſhocking accident was,
" that on returning about eleven o'clock
" from the Palazzo di Guidova, he was
" attacked by two aſſaſſins, who, having
" pierced him with their ſtilettos, ran off,
" leaving him bleeding in the ſtreet,
" where he was found by the ſervants of
" a neighbouring houſe, who knew him,
" and carried him home. As the laws
" of the city prohibited Chriſtian burial
" to thoſe ſects which they deem here-
" tics, I agreed with the keeper of a
" grave-yard to receive the body at
" midnight. The following evening,
" as I was ſitting in my apartment, torn

" by

" by the moſt indiſcribable affliction,
" Madame Velorno entered; ſhe ſeemed
" agitated: 'I am ſorry,' ſaid ſhe, 'to be
" the harbinger of bad tidings in your
" preſent diſtreſſing condition.' 'Inform
" me of the worſt,' I replied, 'no greater
" misfortunes can happen than thoſe
" which have already befallen me.' 'The
" Marcheſe Viſconti,' ſhe anſwered, 'has
" contrived to implicate you in the mur-
" der of the unfortunate Signor. The
" former has long regarded, with jealous
" envy, the preference which Signora di
" Guidova has ſhewn for the Engliſh-
" man, and to prevent ſuſpicion being
" attached to himſelf, he has contrived
" to raiſe a report, that you, maddened
" at Fitz-horton's love for Azolina, had
" hired aſſaſſins to murder him, as he
" returned from her uncle's. This ac-
" count

" count has gained ſuch credit, that a re-
" lation of mine, who reſides with the
" Marcheſe, and who has related all theſe
" particulars to me, tells me, that by to-
" morrow, I may expect the officers of
" juſtice in my houſe, for the purpoſe of
" conveying you to priſon. Careleſs as
" I was of my exiſtence a few hours be-
" fore, ſtill the approach of certain dan-
" ger aroufed my fears ſo highly, that I
" entreated Madame Velorno to aſſiſt
" me in eſcaping.—After chooſing and
" rejecting ſeveral ſchemes, it was at
" length agreed that I ſhould proceed to
" Naples in the diſguiſe of a Savoyard.
" She gave me a letter to her ſiſter, who
" was reſpectably married in that city,
" and by whoſe aſſiſtance, with the jewels
" I carried with me, I might gain admiſ-
" ſion into ſome convent, where, in pe-
" nitence

" nitence and devotion, I ſhould wear
" out the remainder of my exiſtence.'

" At four o'clock the next morning I
" bid a melancholy adieu to the kind
" Madame Velorno, and habited as a Sa-
" voyard, with a mandoline ſlung over
" my ſhoulder, I commenced my jour-
" ney. After travelling two leagues, I
" attained the ſummit of a lofty hill,
" when finding myſelf ſomewhat fatigued,
" I ſat down.—To any one with a mind
" ſufficiently at eaſe the proſpect before
" me would have been enchanting; below,
" extended the rich vale of Arno, in the
" centre of which roſe the lofty ſpires of
" Florence, glittering in the morning
" ſun; behind, a chain of mountains
" reared their ſteep ſummits to the
" clouds, and were ſo ſoftened by
" diſtance

" diſtance that they ſeemed an azure
" miſt. An undeſcribable ſadneſs op-
" preſſed me, and I wept as I took a laſt
" look of the city. Why was I grieved?
" Did I leave behind any friend who
" mourned my abſence? Did I regret
" the parting with ſcenes endeared to
" me by the remembrance of former
" happineſs? No, my tears were the
" tribute of a ſad heart to the ſhrine of
" its own ſorrows. After a journey of
" ſeveral miles, I ſtopped towards even-
" ing at a ſmall albergo, ſome diſtance
" from the road: the ſight of my mando-
" line procured me a kind welcome, and
" after a repaſt of dried grapes and milk,
" I had ſeated myſelf on a turf bench
" before the door to play for ſome young
" villagers who were collected round me,
" when we were interrupted by the haſty
" approach

" approach of a ſervant, who, in broken
" Italian, entreated the aſſiſtance of the
" young men to raiſe, from an overſet,
" the coach of his miſtreſs, who was ſe-
" verely bruiſed by the accident. The
" peaſants ſoon after returned, ſupporting
" an elderly lady, who ſeemed to ſuffer
" extremely from a hurt ſhe received in
" her ancle. As I remembered the pro-
" ceſs which an Engliſh ſurgeon had ob-
" ſerved towards myſelf, on an occaſion
" ſomewhat ſimilar, I offered my ſervice:
" it was accepted. After ſtuping the
" part affected, ſhe was put to bed.
" Finding herſelf much recovered the
" next day, ſhe ſent for me. 'I feel
" myſelf,' ſaid ſhe, 'ſo much indebted to
" your aſſiſtance that I requeſt you will
" accept this as a mark of my thanks,' at
" the ſame time preſenting me her purſe;

" this

" this I refuſed, adding, that I was
" ſufficiently repaid by the pleaſure of
" having been able to render her any
" ſervice. She caſt a penetrating look
" on my face—'You aſtoniſh me; I did
" not expect ſuch a ſentiment or manner
" from one of your appearance!' My
" confuſion increaſed, as ſhe ſtill con-
" tinued to keep her eyes ſteadily fixed
" on me. Gaining confidence, however,
" from the conciliating benevolence that
" beamed on her ſtill beautiful counte-
" nance, I confeſſed to her that my pre-
" ſent garb was aſſumed for the purpoſe
" of eluding the unjuſt perſecution of an
" Italian nobleman, and that I was pro-
" ceeding to Naples, where I intended
" to ſeek a final aſylum in a convent.
" 'You are little acquainted, I ſee,' ſaid
" ſhe, 'with the difficulties which will

" attend

" attend your gaining admiſſion to a con-
" vent, in a country where you own you
" have not a ſingle friend.—My late
" companion has left me in conſequence
" of her marriage: I feel myſelf uncom-
" monly intereſted for you; if you wiſh
" to accept the ſtation, I ſhall endeavour
" to make it as agreeable as circumſtances
" will admit.' I, without heſitation,
" gratefully accepted her offer, and
" being provided with a ſuitable dreſs
" from her wardrobe, we the following
" day proceeded on our journey. By
" the way I learned that ſhe was the
" Marchioneſs D'Embleville, a Norman
" widow of diſtinction; that ſhe had an
" only ſon who accompanied the French
" Ambaſſador, in a diplomatic capacity,
" to the Neapolitan Court, whither ſhe
" was haſtening to join him, when the
" above

" above circumſtances introduced me to
" her notice.

"We arrived at Naples without farther
" accident, and were immediately at-
" tended by the Marquis D'Embleville.
" On his entrance, I was ſurpriſed at
" beholding in him the very young man
" who had ſo kindly intereſted himſelf
" in my illneſs at the Carnival. This
" produced ſuch a painful aſſociation of
" ideas in my mind, that I was obliged to
" leave the room; and during my ab-
" ſence, the Marchioneſs, I ſuppoſe, ac-
" quainted him with my introduction to
" her, as he was more cool on my return
" than before, and did not addreſs me for
" the remainder of the day.

CHAP. V.

—— Can ſhe
Entreat for bread, and want the needful raiment
To wrap her ſhivering boſom from the weather?
When ſhe was mine, no care came ever nigh her;
I thought the gentleſt breeze that wakes the ſpring
Too rough to breathe upon her. Cheerfulneſs
Danced all the day before her——

"A SHORT reſidence with the Mar-
"chioneſs diſcovered to me, that pride
"was the only dark ſhade which tar-
"niſhed her diſpoſition, in other reſ-
"pects highly amiable; and my mind,
"too much broken by misfortune to re-

" tain either petulance or oppoſition,
" was ſo regulated to her ſatisfaction,
" that I ſoon became poſſeſſed of her
" confidence and eſteem. The Mar-
" quis ſtill continued to behave towards
" me with the moſt frigid politeneſs;
" ſometimes I would obſerve him gaz-
" ing on me with extreme earneſtneſs,
" but this I conſidered to proceed from
" motives of temporary curioſity. The
" Marchioneſs one evening, in company
" with ſeveral ladies, had gone to the
" Corſo, to a brilliant diſplay of fire-
" works. As I felt no zeſt for public
" amuſements, I declined the invitation
" to accompany her, and retired to the
" muſic room: a harpſicord lay open,
" I touched ſlightly the keys, ſeated my-
" ſelf, and accompanied with my voice
" the following ſtanzas:

Why

I.

Why thro' nights of ſleepleſs anguiſh,
Flow my eyes with ſorrow's dew;
Say why thus I pine and languiſh?
Deareſt Lionel, 'tis for you.

II.

'Tis becauſe while fancy traces
Scenes of joy we've known before;
All thy nameleſs witching graces
Bleſs my doating eyes no more.

III.

Yet truſt me, tho' this fatal hour
Caus'd me far from thee to part;
Ne'er ſhall time's corroſive power,
Tear thine image from my heart.

IV.

Mem'ry there with gloomy pleaſure
Decks thee in ideal charms;
There I'll hoard the dear-lov'd treaſure,
Whilſt each vein with life's-blood warms.

" Theſe verſes too appoſitely expreſ-
" ſed the feelings of my mind. My
" voice died on my lips as I endea-
" voured to articulate the laſt words,
" and I burſt into tears. A ſlight noiſe
" attracted my attention ; on turning
" round I perceived the Marquis ſtand-
" ing behind my chair. 'I thought, my
" Lord, you were at the Corſo,' ſaid I,
" riſing. 'No, Mademoiſelle Sidney,'
" (the name I adopted) 'I have been more
" entertained at home by your perform-
" ance'.—'Your Lordſhip's taſte,' I re-
" plied gravely, 'in this inſtance yields
" to your politeneſs.' 'Both,' ſaid he,
" 'agree in the truth of my aſſertion.'
" Here the ſound of the Marchioneſs's
" equipage was heard below, and D'Em-
" bleville haſtened to receive her.

" In

" In ſeveral converſations relative to
" the Marquis, Madame D'Embleville
" informed me, that although poſſeſſed
" of moſt amiable qualities, ſtill ſhe ſaw
" with concern, that he was ungovern-
" able in any favourite purſuit, and his
" temper, though naturally gentle, was
" rendered furious by oppoſition; but
" from his choice of a wife (ſhe would
" continue) I have nothing to fear, as
" his pride, in a circumſtance of ſuch
" moment, will never ſuffer him to de-
" rogate from the dignity of himſelf or
" his family. In the courſe of ſix
" months a viſible alteration took place
" in the Marquis, his health and ſpirits
" rapidly declined. The Marchioneſs
" was frightened at this alarming change
" in a ſon whom ſhe doated on to diſtrac-
" tion, and mentioned to me her diſtreſs

" at being unable to account for the
" cauſe of his complaint. ' Has he ever,'
" ſaid ſhe viewing me with a glance of
" ſcrutinizing inquiry, ' mentioned to
" you any circumſtance which could
" lead to a diſcovery of his preſent
" uneaſineſs?' I was hurt at a queſtion
" ſo unlike her uſual manner of addreſſ-
" ing me, and I anſwered coolly, that I
" was not ſufficiently honoured with the
" Marquis's confidence to be entruſted
" with his ſecrets. She withdrew, and
" remained in cloſe conference with
" D'Embleville the reſt of the evening.
" Her behaviour to me the next day
" was unuſually reſerved, as ſhe an-
" ſwered the queſtions which I ven-
" tured to propoſe with a diſtant hauteur
" that ſhe had never before aſſumed to-
" wards me. Madame D'Embleville

" dined

" dined abroad, and after a ſolitary meal
" in my own apartment, I retired to the
" garden, and ſeating myſelf in a ſequeſ-
" tered ſpot began to read the following
" Engliſh Poems:

ROMANCE FIRST.

CASTLE OF ST. CLAIR.

I.

High waves the dank graſs o'er theſe moſs-cover'd walls,
And the weed's rank luxuriance around them is ſpread;
No more is the minſtrel ſong heard in theſe halls,
For the gay voice of muſic for ever is fled.

II.

Oh! fleeting's the ſhadow of grandeur and power,
And man's but the child of corruption and clay;

Then wonder not, ſtranger, that all is in this tower,
Or that we—on it runs hourly to decay.

III.

Yet once in this caſtle the lively and grand,
And gaily as green banners floated in air;
And the widows and lords of the neighbouring land
Knelt at its generous owner, the Baron St. Clair.

IV.

Still to add to his bliſs had a daughter been born,
And many a young Knight with a ſigh owned her fair;
For the bud of the wild-roſe that peeps thro' the thorn,
Could ſcarce with the ſoft bluſh of Bertha compare.

V.

One night when the tempeſt ſwept mountain and vale,
And the wind-ſpirit ſhrieked from a cloud where he ſat;

In

In the dead calm that followed each thundering peal,
Was the ſound of the bugle horn heard at the gate.

VI.

A trav'ller bewilder'd for ſhelter implores,
To the ſeneſchal's challenge a ſtranger replies;
Haſte, open in mercy! for fierce the rain pours,
And the light'ning its lurid glare darts o'er the ſkies.

VII.

Then ſtraight to the hall was the ſtranger convey'd,
The youth was engaging, and lovely to view;
A templar's red croſs on his ſhield was portray'd,
And the plumes of his helmet were ſable and blue.

VIII.

Thrice welcome, young Knight, to our hall, cried St. Clair,
Full dear is the fame of your order to me;
And haſt thou been fighting in Bethlehem's war?
Or do'ſt thou return from fam'd Galilee?

IX.

Oh, yes, noble Baron, from Ramah I came,
Where the creſcents of Saladin ne'er ſhall riſe more;
For breathleſs they lie by the Euphrate's ſtream,
That bluſh'd to be ſtain'd by their infidel gore.

X.

Scarce a week at the caſtle the ſtranger had ſtay'd,
When in Bertha's ſoft boſom he kindled a flame;
As a ſerpent that lurks under flow'rs, he betrayed,
And left her to miſery, anguiſh, and ſhame.

XI.

From her parting embrace, as impatiant he tore,
He vow'd that his abſence ſhe long ſhould not mourn;
But vain were theſe vows and the oaths that he ſwore,
For never again did the falſe one return.

Poor

XII.

Poor Bertha, in agonies, yielded her breath
On the day that an infant to being ſhe gave;
And St. Clair a relief from his woe found in death,
And that dark waving cypreſs o'erſhadows his grave.

XIII.

On the firſt riſing dawn of each midſummer's morn,
To the tomb of fair Bertha young maidens repair,
With panſies and hare-bells the ſpot to adorn,
And drop o'er her mouldering relics a tear.

XIV.

'Tis for this that the dank graſs waves high on theſe walls,
And the weed's rank luxuriance around them is ſpread;
No more is the minſtrel's ſong heard in theſe halls,
For the gay voice of muſic for ever is fled.

ROMANCE.

RONDEAU.

I.

Dryad nymphs and fairy train,
Cluſt'ring round in ſocial ring,
Liſten, whilſt in merry ſtrain,
I my wanton frolics ſing.

II.

When the firſt tint of roſy dawn,
Illumes the bluſhing eaſtern ſky,
I quit the flower dappled lawn,
And high on glitt'ring pinions fly.

III.

O'er mountain ſteep and lowland vale,
Where king-cups ſpring, and gay hawthorn,
O'er darken'd wood and op'ning dale,
Fann'd by the dewy breath of morn.

IV.

And oft I dip my flutt'ring wings
At noon, where bluſhing Nayad's charms,
Amid ſome lonely chryſtal ſprings,
Allure me to their beauteous arms.

" I had ſcarcely finiſhed the peruſal,
" when the Marquis approached. ' I
" have long, Mademoiſelle Sidney,' ſaid
" he, ſeating himſelf, and looking ear-
" neſtly in my face, ' combated againſt
" a paſſion which preys on my vitals,
" but vain are all my efforts, love ſtill
" predominates. My mother, I am
" ſorry to find, diſapproves my choice,
" but the object of my affection, how-
" ever humble, can never diſgrace my
" judgment. *You* are that object, per-
" mit

" mit me then to offer you my hand and
" fortune ; my heart I cannot beſtow,
" *that* has long been yours.' Amaze-
" ment at a developement ſo unexpected
" for a while deprived me of utterance;
" after collecting my ſcattered ſenſes, I
" thanked him for the honour which he
" conferred on me by the offer of his
" hand, but ſolemnly aſſured him that
" for me to enter into a matrimonial
" engagement was impoſſible, that I had
" no heart to beſtow, and concluded
" with hoping that I ſhould ſee him
" bleſſed with a lady more ſuited to his
" high rank, than the humble depend-
" ant on his mother's bounty.

" His countenance, during my reply,
" alternately changed from red to pale.
" When I was done he aroſe, and
" haughtily

" haughtily obſerving that the Marquis
" D'Embleville was not accuſtomed to
" beg in vain, and requeſting that I
" would maturely conſider his propoſal,
" he retired. Perplexity encompaſſed
" me on every ſide; to remain with
" the Marchioneſs now would be im-
" practicable; and in a land of ſtrangers,
" with ſcarcely a ſingle hope to graſp
" at, what muſt become of me without
" her protection? for, on previous in-
" quiry, I found that the ſiſter of Ma-
" dame Velorno was dead. In this
" ſtate of wretched uncertainty I retired
" to my room, and ſeated myſelf in a
" window, when my attention was
" aroufed by a gentleman in the ſtreet,
" who demanded, in Engliſh, 'When
" the veſſel would ſail for Great Britain?'
" 'To-morrow morning, ſir,' ſaid a
" ſailor

" ſailor to whom he was ſpeaking. I
" inſtantly adopted my reſolution; hur-
" rying on my cloak, I followed the
" ſailor to the end of the ſtreet, and in-
" quired if I could ſee the captain; the
" man immediately conducted me to
" him. Having ſettled my paſſage, I
" got a lazarone to convey my trunks
" on board, whilſt the Marchioneſs was
" ſtill abroad, and D'Embleville engaged
" with viſitants. Having written a
" farewell letter to Madame D'Emble-
" ville, ſtating my reaſons for this ſtep,
" and returning my moſt grateful thanks
" for the many favours I experienced
" from her kindneſs, a kindneſs which
" ſhould never be obliterated from my
" memory, I left it on her dreſſing table,
" and leaving the houſe unperceived,
" embarked for my native country.

" After a prosperous voyage we ar-
" rived at Dover; on our landing, se-
" veral people flocked round their
" friends, and welcomed them to their
" native Britain with tears of joy; but
" for me no face beamed with gladness,
" no one cried, ' God save you.' I
" was doomed by my own follies to be
" a solitary outcast. I proceeded to
" London immediately, and taking a
" lodging in the most retired part of the
" town, supported myself with the sale
" of my jewels, which the munificence
" of Madame D'Embleville enabled
" me to keep untouched. I had made
" several ineffectual inquiri es respect-
" ing your father, and you, my child,
" till by an accidental circumstance I
" was informed of your residence in Cum-
" berland, and hither I determined to
" go

" go, notwithſtanding my extreme weak-
" neſs from a recent heavy ſickneſs, for
" my heart yearned to ſee you before it
" ſhould pleaſe my Creator to ſummon
" me to his preſence.

" I took a ſeat in the mail coach, and
" ſtopping within two miles of the houſe,
" diſguiſed myſelf as a travelling toy-
" ſeller, with a large bonnet to conceal
" my face, and a baſket on my arm,
" proceeded to Seldon. As I dreaded
" to meet your father, my plan was to
" remain in ſome neighbouring cottage
" a few days, until chance ſhould bleſs
" me with a ſight of you. On inquiry,
" however, I found that your father was
" then abſent at a viſitation, and with a
" palpitating heart I entered the houſe;
" a maid ſervant was buſy in cleaning
" the

" the parlour for her maſter's return:
" having pleaſed her by a cheap pur-
" chaſe, I aſked if there were children
" in the houſe? 'Yes,' ſaid ſhe,
" 'there is one little precious, but he
" has tired himſelf with play, and has
" fallen aſleep on yonder ſofa.' Oh,
" Henry! beloved of my ſoul, how did
" the heart of your wretched mother
" ſwell, almoſt to burſting, when ſhe
" gazed over you, when ſhe imprinted
" a kiſs on your forehead, and twined
" her fingers in the ringlets of your
" hair! How did I curſe my own
" weakneſs in yielding to the villain
" who had ſeduced me to forego my
" happineſs and honour. My tears and
" emotions excited the curioſity of the
" girl, but I ſatisfied her with an evaſive
" truth, that I loſt a child who ſtrongly

" reſembled

" reſembled you, and diverting her at-
" tention to ſome ribbons, I contrived
" to cut off a ſmall lock of your hair,
" which I have ever ſince treaſured
" next my heart. A ſudden exclama-
" tion from the maid, that her maſter
" was coming, forced me to quit the
" houſe.

" At the near approach of your
" father a ſickly tremor ſeized me—my
" limbs refuſed their office, and I was
" obliged to ſit down beneath a large
" tree, by which he was to paſs; I
" pulled my bonnet over my face, and
" ventured to take a tranſient glance
" while he rode up. He ſtopped at the
" ſpot where I ſat, threw a ſhilling into
" the baſket that lay beſide me, and
" without ſpeaking paſſed on. A pale

" ſettled

" ſettled melancholy overſpread his
" face—it was an additional pang to
" my heart."

POSTSCRIPT.

" On returning to London, my little
" ſtock was nearly exhauſted, I applied
" to a neighbouring milliner for employ-
" ment, and during ſeveral years, con-
" trived to ſupport myſelf by different
" light works, but my health rapidly de-
" clining, I was no longer able to endea-
" vour for ſubſiſtence—but it is cruel to
" torture you with detailing the miſery I
" endured. On being unable to diſcharge
" a debt I had unavoidably incurred to
" my landlord, I was arreſted: you know
" the reſt.—I have only to requeſt, my
" Henry, that when my ſoul ſhall have

" winged

" winged its flight to that 'bourne from
" whence no traveller returns,' in the
" trembling hope that repentance and
" contrition may plead for my offences,
" you will never ſuffer your reaſon to be
" lulled by the deluſive ſubtlety of liber-
" tiniſm; preſerve the early leſſons of
" virtue and religion that have directed
" your youth, and which alone can inſure
" ultimate happineſs. So when this bo-
" ſom ſhall ceaſe to throb with anguiſh,
" and theſe eyes to drop the tear of mi-
" ſery, you will, with ſatisfaction, own
" thoſe truths which melancholy expe-
" rience has taught your unfortunate
" mother.

" CLARA LENOX."

CHAP. VI.

My griefs are fled;
Surpriſing happineſs, unlook'd for joy.
DISTREST MOTHER.

Such his attire: but ah! no pen can trace
The various beauties of his lovely face.

HENRY having reſigned the parſonage to his father's ſucceſſor, and bidding a mournful adieu to the ſcenes of his childhood, ſet out for London. As it was late when he arrived, he deferred his purpoſed viſit till the following morning, when

when he ſhould be more prepared for this interview with his grandfather, on which entirely depended his future proſpects.

General Cleveland had, ſoon after the clandeſtine marriage of his daughter with Mr. Lenox embarked for India, where an exalted ſtation in the government of that country enabled him to amaſs a ſplendid fortune. Time, which eradicates the deepeſt reſentment, had ſo far ſubdued his anger, that he wrote to a friend in England to inquire the family and circumſtances of Lenox and his wife. Every latent ſpark of rage and diſappointment kindled with redoubled fury on receiving an anſwer, that the latter had eloped with Fitz-horton; and that the former, with his ſon, retired to ſome obſcure village in the north of England. Lenox,

the

the broken hearted, ſuffering Lenox, he blamed as the entire cauſe of this misfortune, and vowed, in the bitterneſs of his heart, that they ſhould ever be aliens to his affection. After a reſidence of ſeveral years in India, his conſtitution was ſo much impaired by a bilious complaint, that his phyſician adviſed him to try the more temperate climate of his native country, whither he returned with a numerous retinue and all the pomp of oriental grandeur; and in ſix weeks after the great Eaſt Indian nabob arrived at his magnificent reſidence in Pall Mall, did he receive the letter, containing the mournful ſtory of the humble curate of Seldon. Pride, anger, pity, alternately poſſeſſed his mind on peruſing its contents. Should he take into friendſhip the offspring of that man who cruſhed

his high-wrought hopes of elevated connection for his child, and whom he conſidered as the original inſtigator of her diſobedience? and yet the pathetic remonſtrance—the uncomplaining gentleneſs that pervaded every line, powerfully ſpoke to his heart. In this fluctuating ſtate of mind he continued for ſeveral weeks, till death, in the interim, freed Lenox from anxiety and pain.

About one o'clock, the morning after his arrival in town, Henry, with a mind agitated by a thouſand painful doubts, proceeded to his grandfather's. Notwithſtanding the advantages of an elegant figure, and a face rendered peculiarly intereſting by the melancholy which recent events diffuſed over his fine features, there was ſtill an appearance of ruſticity

ruſticity in the cut of his clothes, and looſe hair, which, contrary, to the then exiſting faſhion, curled in gloſſy unpowdered ringlets round his neck. A coronet coach ſtood at the door. On inquiring if General Cleveland was at home, he was anſwered in the negative by a laced footman, who meaſured him contemptuouſly with his eye. "My bu-
"ſineſs with your maſter is of a moſt ſe-
"rious nature," ſaid Henry, doubting the veracity of the ſervant. "Oh! thouſands
"ſay the ſame, whoſe buſineſs is not worth
"the trouble of liſtening to. You may—
"however—wait—here—until my maſ-
"ter is diſengaged." In a few minutes, two noblemen, adorned with an order of knighthood, croſſed the hall; the bowing menials, in ſilent reſpect helped them into the ſhining vehicle, which proudly rolled

away with its noble burden. Henry ſighed, as he reflected on the general adulation paid to appearance and rank, which ſometimes owes more to a general aſſent of courteſy than to real merit.

"Tell the young man to come up," ſaid the groom of the chamber. Henry, after paſſing through a ſuit of magnificent apartments, was conducted to the preſence of General Cleveland. He was dreſſed in regimentals, his figure was tall, venerable from his grey hairs, which ſhaded his temples. Henry ſtopped involuntarily as the door ſhut him in, his voice was choaked with emotion. "You ſay, that you have buſineſs with "me, young man," ſaid the general. "Yes, ſir," replied he, vainly endeavouring to ſuppreſs his tears; "I am "come

" come to claim your protection."—"To " whom do I addreſs myſelf?" aſked his grandfather, viſibly agitated. " My " father was the Reverend Lionel Le- " nox."—" And is he dead?"—Henry drew his hand over his eyes as he replied, in a voice half-ſtifled, " Yes."—" Poor " boy! I *will* protect you, I *will* be a fa- " ther to you."—A tear ſtarted in his eye, and fell on the hand of Henry, which he graſped, where it gliſtened as the ſignet of conciliated affection. " You are " very like your mother," ſaid the general, viewing him with a look of fondneſs mingled with regret.

Orders were iſſued to the houſehold, that due reſpect ſhould be paid to Mr. Lenox, as the only child of the maſter. Henry, now raiſed from dependence,

doubt, and anxiety, to a ſtation more exalted than his moſt ſanguine wiſhes could lately have flattered him to expect, determined to merit the favourable opinion of his grandfather, by a ſtrict obedience to all his directions. The General, pleaſed with his engaging manners and well cultivated underſtanding, which a nearer acquaintance more fully expanded, gave him daily proofs of his increaſing affection and eſteem. Previous to his introducing him into public, he one day called him into his ſtudy, and ſeating himſelf by his ſide, "Henry," ſaid he, "you are well aware of the unfortunate "conſequences which your mother's pre-"cipitate marriage entailed on her. To "caution *you* againſt a ſimilar raſhneſs is "the purport of this address. Never "let your judgment be ſubdued by ap-

"pearance,

" pearance,—nor form, as you value my " affection, any matrimonial ſcheme in " which my choice is not conſulted." Henry ſolemnly promiſed a ſtrict obſervation of this injunction; but it was the promiſe of an unalienated heart, confident of its power, from never having ſuffered temptation; and a circumſtance ſoon after occurred that proved to him the inſufficiency of promiſes, againſt a paſſion with whoſe force we are unacquainted.

MATILDA'S STORY.

Matilda was the daughter of an officer: Her mother blaſted the ambitious projects of an only brother, Sir George Belgrave, who, at the time of her eſpouſing

Captain Oſmington, had promiſed her hand to the Duke of Berwick, an old nobleman, high in the favour of court: his rage on receiving a letter from Mr. Oſmington, deprecating his diſpleaſure at her marriage, was ungovernable. He ſent the trunks containing her clothes, on the following day, to her lodgings, and encloſed fifty pounds in a letter, loaded with the moſt bitter invectives, avowing that ſhe ſhould ever after be an object of his ſettled hatred; and concluded with mentioning, that this was the only ſum ſhe was ever to expect from him; for as her parents died inteſtate ſhe was left entirely dependent on his will. The regiment to which Oſmington belonged was ordered for Ireland, to which place he was accompanied by his wife, where their affection was cloſer cemented

cemented by the birth of little Matilda. Eight years of uninterrupted harmony had paſt, when Captain Oſmington was ſeized with a violent fever, which, in a few days, terminated his exiſtence. As the retroſpection of happy ſcenes ſpent with her adored huſband, in a country noted for hoſpitality and ſocial virtues, gave additional poignancy to her preſent griefs, ſhe immediately returned to England; and as ſhe hoped that her preſent forlorn condition would incline him to compaſſionate her diſtreſs, ſhe, on her arrival in London, proceeded to Sir George's houſe in Soho, dreſſed in deep mourning, and accompanied by her little Matilda. She did not ſend up her name, but mentioned that ſhe had ſomething to communicate to Sir George in perſon. He would be down immediate-

ly, ſhe was anſwered. While ſhe ſtood in the hall, a beautiful young lady tripped lightly down ſtairs, and looking earneſtly in her face, went into an oppoſite apartment.—Mrs. Oſmington thought it was more a look of tenderneſs and compaſſion than a curſory glance of curioſity. "Who is that young lady?" demanded ſhe of the porter.—"My "miſtreſs," replied the man.—"Is your "maſter married?"—"Yes, madam." Mrs. Oſmington ſighed. Sir George's ſtep was heard approaching—ſhe pulled her veil over her face.—"Your buſineſs, "madam," ſaid he abruptly.—"I ſhould "wiſh, ſir,"——"Ha! ſerpent, is it you?" ſaid he, immediately recollecting her.—"Never dare again to approach me;" and puſhing her violently out of the door, clapped it in her face. Matil-

da

da ſcreamed with terror, at the inſult offered her mother, who with difficulty ſupported herſelf to a neighbouring ſhop; where a flood of tears prevented her from fainting. On returning to her lodging, ſhe found that her money was reduced to a ſingle guinea, and a conſiderable time ſhould elapſe before ſhe could receive that penſion which the humanity of the Britiſh government alone extends to the widows of all officers who die in commiſſion. She had now been a fortnight in London, and notwithſtanding the utmoſt frugality, ſhe found that her expences far exceeded her previous calculations. She had no acquaintance in town that ſhe could apply to for relief, nor did any mode for ſubſiſtence preſent itſelf to her view.

While ſhe was in ſilent deſpair, gazing on her child, who ſat weeping by her knee, the landlord entered, and preſenting her a bill for lodging-money and other expences of the week, requeſted that ſhe would have the amount by ſix o'clock that evening, as he had a conſiderable ſum to pay at that time. She looked at the amount; it was five guineas. Misfortune preſſed her like a weight of waters down! and her mind, as if ſtretched to its utmoſt pitch of ſufferance, ſunk into a torpid ſtate of apathy, when ſhe was aroufed by a meſſage, that a ſervant wiſhed to ſpeak with her; on being ſhewn in, he delivered a letter which, he ſaid, required no anſwer, bowed, and retired. It was from the Vifcounteſs Walbrook (wife to Sir George), evidently written in haſte, requeſting, in the

the moſt delicate manner, her acceptance of the encloſed bank note for ſixty pounds. On receipt of this unexpected bleſſing, Mrs. Oſmington raiſed her eyes in tearful gratitude to that Being who loveth though he chaſteneth. Having arranged her affairs in town, ſhe retired to a country village in the weſt of England, where, in the cultivation of her daughter's mind, ſhe endeavoured to ſink the remembrance of former misfortunes.

CHAP.

CHAP. VII.

SEVERAL years was thus ſpent by Mrs. Oſmington in ſecluded retirement, while Matilda, like a flower born to bluſh unſeen, increaſed in years and lovelineſs: her ſtature was ſomewhat above the middle ſize; her complexion of the white roſe tint; and in her whole perſon was blended that feminine elegance which is the diſtinguiſhing characteriſtic of female beauty. The health of her mother

mother was now beginning rapidly to decline; the latter had long ſtruggled to conceal her increaſing weakneſs from Matilda; but the death-like paleneſs which ſickneſs and anxiety ſpread on her countenanee, was too fatally evident; and as ſhe gazed on the emaciated face of her parent, ſhe ſhuddered at the dark cloud that impended over her future proſpects.

One ſummer's evening, having ſeated herſelf by the ſide of her mother, ſhe began to read aloud a Collection of Poems which they had borrowed from the neighbouring curate. One piece Mrs. Oſmington ſeemed to admire more than the reſt, it was intitled,

THE

THE SPRIGHT OF ULLIN.

I.

WHEN the dark veil of night clouds the welkin around,
And the landſcape is loſt to the view,
When the convent bells toll through the breezes reſound,
And the flow'ret is cloſed with the dew:

II.

'Tis then, 'mid the gloom of the ſtill midnight hour,
When ſleep wraps the toil-worn hind,
I riſe from my grave, near yon ivy-clad tower,
And float on the wings of the wind:

III.

O'er ocean's broad boſom, o'er rocks higheſt ſteep,
Where mermaids ſad elegies ſing,
Now ſink to the loweſt receſs of the deep,
When ſea-gods collect round their king:

IV.

Then ſwift as the lightning's wing'd flaſh I riſe,
Thro' regions to mortals unknown,
O'er mountains of ice pil'd on ice to the ſky,
And the bounds of the earth's frozen zone;

V.

There, ſcared by the circlet of darkneſs and light,
The ſtill gloom I re-meaſure again;
To a high ſhelving rock I direct my ſwift flight,
On the ſhores of the weſtern main:

VI.

When I tune my air harp in the ſtill ſolemn gloom,
And pour forth ſuch raviſhing ſtrains
That the ſpectres of heroes ariſe from the tomb,
And chiefs that in battle were ſlain:

VII.

'Tis then that the ſpright of Haruſcal the brave,
All feſtring in many a foul wound,
With gore-clotted ringlets aſcends from the grave,
And liſts to my harp's thrilling ſound.

VIII.

But hark! the cock loudly proclaims the firſt hour
That precedes the fair morn's ſilver light,
Now I ſink to my tomb, near yon ivy-clad tow'r,
And wait the approach of the night.

Matilda had juſt concluded the piece, when the ſpring of a travelling coach, which was driving haſtily by, broke, nearly oppoſite to the door of the cottage.—The only traveller it contained was a lady who was carried into the houſe, almoſt fainting from terror. On recovering from her fright, ſhe entreated Mrs. Oſmington's pardon, with affected humility, for the trouble ſhe gave her, mentioned that ſhe had been on a viſit to a diſtant relation, from whence ſhe was returning when the preſent miſ-

chance

chance forced her to intrude on her elegant retirement. Mrs. Oſmington, whoſe native dignity no external circumſtances could ſuppreſs, returned an appropriate anſwer; and the ſervant entering with the information that the village ſmith could not repair the ſpring until the enſuing morning, ſhe requeſted that the lady would for that night honour her humble dwelling with her company: to which the latter, after ſeveral apologies, acceded. A book lay on the window, with the name Harriet Belgrave inſcribed on the title-page. "I once had "a dear friend of that name," ſaid the lady; "but, poor thing, ſhe diſobliged her "friends by marrying a man without "fortune, and I have never ſince heard "of her." She had ſcarcely ſpoken theſe words, when Mrs. Oſmington recogniſed her

her to be Maria Rivers, the friend and ſchool-fellow of her early years, and now the widow of the Honourable Mr. Montague. She was about forty, ſtill handſome, and although the roſes of youth had faded on her cheek, their place was amply ſupplied by Fargean's beſt bloom. After expreſſing her great joy at the unexpected meeting, and her extreme ſorrow at the altered ſtate and appearance of her friend, a mutual inquiry took place relative to intermediate events: Mrs. Oſmington, with unfeigned ſorrow, heard that Lady Walbrook was dead. She had ſeen her only once; but that view, with her ſubſequent kind behaviour, endeared her to her memory. The next morning, previous to the departure of her gueſt, Mrs. Oſmington, during the abſence of Matilda, mentioned

ed the precarious ſtate of her own health, and the unprotected helpleſs ſtate of her child, ſhould a ſudden call of fate ſummon her to eternity: this, ſhe ſaid, was now her only earthly concern:—and if Mrs. Montague would promiſe to extend her protection to Matilda, ſhe ſhould more peaceably ſink to that grave, where ſhe felt herſelf rapidly approaching. Mrs. Montague, after ſoothing her with the moſt warm proteſtations of ſteady friendſhip for Miſs Oſmington, and taking an affectionate leave of her dear recluſe, ſet out for the metropolis. The truth of theſe promiſes was ſoon to be required, for the deceaſe of Mrs. Oſmington happened about three months after. A ſhort time before her death, ſhe wrote to Mrs. Montague, intimating that, as ſhe was certain of the inutility

of

of any application to her brother, ſhe reſted her principal hope of protection for Matilda on her alone. Mr. Grey, the curate of the village, undertook to regulate the laſt ſad offices of mortality to the remains of Mrs. Oſmington; and having converted the little property which remained into money, he brought the mourning orphan to his own houſe, previous to her intended journey to London. Sixty pounds was the little all of Matilda, which Mr. Grey preſented her in a pocket-book, as he put her into the ſtage coach, and invoking a benediction for her ſafety, which was half loſt in the clatter of the wheels, the vehicle ſet forward. The company conſiſted of a country farmer; a female domeſtic in a baronet's family; a grocer's wife, who was the arbitreſs of fa-

ſhion

ſhion in her native village; and Matilda. A deep ſilence for a while enſued, which none of the company ſeemed willing to interrupt. "Pray, Miſs," ſaid the grocer's lady, at length addreſſing Matilda, with a look of ſagacious ſcrutiny, "was "your habit made in *Lun*don?" "No, ma-"dam." "I was thinking ſo, for it is waſtly "ungenteel cut; the dark colour, though, "is well enough; my ſon Bob had a coat "of the ſame kind when he went to the "Weſt Indies." "Is'nt them Weſt Indies "in America, ma'm?" demanded the baronet's domeſtic. "Mun du, not at all, "they are in Jamaica, where the rum and "brandy is made." "It's fine living *there*, "I warrant you," replied the girl. "You "are right, ma'm, my Bob lives there like "any Lord; but he was always taſty, and "has a nice library—Virgil, and Dr. Solo-

"mon's

"mon's Guide to Health, and other *gen-*
"*teel autors.*" "Was not that Solomon
"called the wiſe man?" aſked the ſer-
vant. "Lard! no, (ſimpering) that was
"an old body that wrote ſome proverbs,
"and lived a hundred years ago; this is
"a different gentleman." Here the car-
riage ſtoppingat an inn for breakfaſt,
the converſation ended.

On the evening of the ſecond day,
Matilda arrived in town. The immenſe
crowd hurrying in every direction—the
glare of lamps and flambeaux, added to
the rattle of chariots, and other con-
fuſed ſounds, impreſſed her with more
terror than curioſity. On arriving at
the hotel, her fellow-travellers imme-
diately departed to their reſpective ac-
quaintance, and Matilda was, for the firſt
time,

time, left in a ſtrange houſe without a friend or protector. The noiſy carouſal of ſome gentlemen in an adjoining apartment, with the buſtle of waiters and ſervants through the whole houſe, increaſed her uneaſineſs ſo much, that, although it was ten o'clock, ſhe ſent for a hackney coach, and drove to Mrs. Montague's; unfortunately there was a ſplendid route at the houſe of that lady, and the door was ſo ſurrounded with the equipages of the different company, that it was with extreme difficulty the humble vehicle of Matilda drew up. The laced footman who let down the ſtep, drew back in aſtoniſhment at the appearance of a young girl dreſſed in a travelling habit, and her face concealed by a plain ſtraw bonnet. To her timid, half audible inquiry if Mrs. Montague was at home,

the ſervant, with a ſneer, demanded if ſhe was from the country?--"Yes."—"Then "your viſit is mal-apropos, for Mrs. Montague is not at home for country friends." ——"This viſit, ſir," ſaid Matilda, "with a tremulous heſitation, is "by her own deſire." This information produced a more reſpectful conduct from the ſervant, who ſhewed her into a retired parlour, until his lady could be informed of her arrival. After half an hour of trembling uncertainty, Mrs. Montague entered. Matilda ſhrunk voluntarily from the gorgeous figure that ſtood before her, blazing in diamonds, and towering in white plumes: the kind reception of that lady, however, removed her confuſion, who, having renewed her promiſes of friendſhip, and apologized for being forced to leave her ſo ſoon,

gave

gave directions for a chamber to be prepared for her; when she retired to rest, with a heart considerably lightened by the smiling prospects which hope's fairy figure continually pointed to her youthful fancy.

Mrs. Montague was, at the age of twenty-four, left a widow, with a considerable jointure, and a family consisting of a son and daughter: the former was at the present period in the guards, and the latter had arrived at maturity.

With an understanding naturally weak, Mrs. Montague possessed a disposition so relaxed by the perpetual gratification of her desires, that caprice was the ruling passion by which her every action was directed.——————Her benevolence (if

it merited that title) was actuated more by the temporary obedience of whim, than any intrinſic love of virtue; and her knowledge of practical logic was ſo indifferent, that her words were often contrary to her ideas, and ſometimes unaccompanied by any ideas at all. The perſon, for whoſe appearance her face would beam with ſmiles, and who was her *deareſt friend*, was immediatly after their departure, a *creature*—an intolerable bore. Her vanity was gratified by a diſplay of *tender affection* for the *dear orphan* committed to her protection; and this conſideration, independant of all humane motives, enſured Miſs Oſmington a kind reception from her patroneſs—Such was the perſon on whoſe protection the unfriended and unfortuned Matilda was now to depend.

Captain

Captain Montague was a young man, endowed with the moſt brilliant accompliſhments:—his knowledge in horſe-fleſh was allowed to exceed that of any groom at Newmarket, and few daſhed a curricle down Bond-ſtreet with greater ſwiftneſs or addreſs;—his boots had ſet the faſhion to ſome of the handſomeſt young fellows at court;—and none, after a ſixth bottle at a debauch, could exceed his ſobriety:——he looked at Matilda through his glaſs, on her firſt appearance at dinner, remarking, in her hearing, that ſhe was 'a prettyiſh griſſette;' and ſeldom after, to her relief, took notice of her.

Julia Montague was above the middle ſize; her face was beautiful,—but there was a haughty reſerve ſo blended in her

whole contour, that ſhe ſeemed rather to repel than ſhrink from the gaze of admiration:——her behaviour to Matilda was cold and unbending.

CHAP. VIII.

And what is friendſhip but a name,
A form that lulls to ſleep;
A ſhade that follows wealth and fame,
But leaves the wretch to weep.

MISS Oſmington's firſt introduction into public was at a ball given by an acquaintance of Mrs. Montague; the latter had taken care to mention ſome leading circumſtances relative to her protegee, and was delighted with the enco-

miums paid her for her kindneſs to the poor creature. The object of this inſulting pity was ſuffered to ſit, unnoticed, in a corner of the room, till the concluſion of the firſt ſet, when an elegant looking young man came up, ſeated himſelf by her ſide, and after ſome previous converſation, requeſted the honour of her hand for the enſuing dance: 'twas Henry Lenox. Matilda bluſhed exceſſively, on declaring herſelf not ſufficiently ſkilled in dancing, to perform in public. To any other perſon than Lenox, this avowal, from a lady in a London ball-room, would have cauſed a ſmile; but he was too much pleaſed with the intereſting ſweetneſs of her expreſſive countenance, to form a premature judgment from her reply, and continued to ſit by her during the remainder of the night in

converſation. At ſupper, his attention was equally delicate; and on a ſummons from Mrs. Montague to depart, he attended her to the coach. "Thank you, "Mr. Lenox," ſaid that lady, to whom Henry had been previouſly introduced, "you are very kind to my Matilda." "Miſs Oſmington's acceptance of my trif- "ling ſervices amply repays them, Ma- dam," ſaid Henry, bowing. "Really, "Matilda," ſaid Mrs. Montague, as they drove home, "Lenox was unuſually "gallant to *you*, to night." "His grand- "father," obſerved the captain, "keeps "a famous ſtud." "He is the moſt "lack-a-dayſical kind of handſome auto- "maton I ever beheld," ſaid Miſs Mon- tague; "he never dances." He would have danced with me—thought Matilda. The reflection delighted her. Lenox's

 image,

image, for the remainder of the night, was inſeparable from her thoughts. Fancy (notwithſtanding the contrary aſſertion of an eminent modern author) does not paint *al freſco:* pleaſed with the outline of any ſtriking object, it frequently adds ſuch ſhining touches, ſuch ornamental imagery, that the glowing picture ſcarcely retains a trace of the original.

The affection of the general for Henry daily increaſed: he ſettled a handſome ſalary on him; introduced him to circles of high rank, and, among others, to the Montague family. His fine perſon and elegant manners ſoon made an impreſſion on the heart of Julia; but the polite indifference with which he always behaved towards her, diſcouraged her hopes,

hopes, without ſubduing her paſſion. She was hurt by his pointed attention to Matilda at the ball, and this increaſed that envious diſlike which ſhe always evinced for the latter.

Pity is ſometimes the nurſe of love:—it was the lot of Henry to find it ſo.—He was told that Matilda was an orphan, dependant on the bounty of Mrs. Montague; and he felt intereſted for the diſtreſs of a young creature, who required a more ſtable proſpect, than the oſtentatious pity of her capricious patroneſs.

Matilda had ſcarcely ſpent three months in London, when a material change took place in Mrs. Montague's behaviour to her. The vanity of that

lady was now no longer gratified by the praiſes beſtowed on her kindneſs to the poor girl: the ſubject was exhauſted and ſeveral occurrences took place, which daily rendered Matilda's ſituation more irkſome. A route was given at Mrs. Montague's; and, among ſeveral young men of faſhion pre ſent, was Lord Mount Villars, an accompliſhed young nobleman, juſt returned from the continent. "Oſmington, ſettle this train," ſaid Miſs Montague, turning to Matilda; "Mount-Villars has juſt come in, and I "ſuppoſe he will be teaſing me to dance." His lordſhip came up, and bowing ſlightly to Miſs Montague, requeſted the honour of Matilda's hand: ſhe declined. "Will you, Miſs Montague, plead for me, "with your fair friend?" ſaid his lordſhip; "ſhe refuſes to dance, altho' diſengaged."

"*Friend!*"

"*Friend!*" ſaid ſhe, darting a look of angry contempt at the trembling Matilda; "your lordſhip allows me more humility "than I merit, in ſuppoſingthat a friend-"ſhip exiſts between me and that perſon." He ſeemed confuſed, turned an eye of pity on the pale face of Matilda, and withdrew. Miſs Montague immediately followed, ſwelling with rage and diſappointment, while the unconſcious cauſe of this brouille returned to her chamber; where, as the tear of ſorrow rolled down her cheek, ſhe experienced that heart-ſickening anguiſh which inſulted, dependant poverty is too often doomed to feel from unfeeling arrogance. At breakfaſt, the next morning, Mrs. Montague deigned not to take the ſlighteſt notice of her: talked to her daughter of the vanity and ingra-

titude

titude of ſome creatures; rang for her chariot, and went out, leaving her petrified with aſtoniſhment at this unmerited rudeneſs. The precarioufneſs of her ſituation now preſented itſelf to her view in its moſt varied wretchedneſs, and tears, that afforded no alleviation to her ſorrow, had forced a paſſage through her eyes, when Lenox was announced; and the ſervant had ſcarcely delivered his name, when he approached. He ſtopped on advancing a few ſteps, as if in doubt to proceed farther. Matilda, ſmiling thro' the tears that ſtill trembled on her cheeks requeſted him to ſit down, as Mrs. Montague would ſhortly be in. He complied, drew his chair near her, and looked earneſtly in her face:——"You have heard "no diſagreeable intelligence from your friends,

"friends, I hope?" ſaid Henry. "None, Sir," ſaid ſhe, ſighing. There was a modeſt candour, an open, but delicate ſincerity in the manners of Henry that graced his every word and look: in ſuch a manner was his queſtion propoſed, and with kindneſs it was received by Matilda; but he had unconſciouſly touched a chord that vibrated to her heart: ſhe had no friend——no kind boſom to which ſhe could impart the grief that oppreſſed her;—and, notwithſtanding the preſence of Henry, ſhe could not ſuppreſs her tears:——her ſorrow affected him;—he thought her more lovely—more intereſting than ever: his boaſted indifference fled; his promiſe to the general was forgotten; and, in acknowledging a paſſion which had for ſome time ſtruggled in his

his breaſt, was bleſſed with the diſcovery of a mutual affection in the heart of Matilda.

In the midſt of this converſation Mrs. Montague entered. Lenox placed the viſit entirely to her account, and was preparing to depart, when ſhe requeſted him to wait dinner; he conſented, and attaching himſelf to Miſs Montague for the remainder of the evening, ſcarcely ſpoke to Matilda. She, with gratitude, beheld the delicacy of his behaviour, and a ſenſation of unuſual delight filled her boſom, on reflecting, that ſhe was bleſſed with the affections of one whom alone ſhe eſtemed above all other earthly beings.

Henry,

Henry, at an early hour, roſe to depart; a ſlight bow was all the notice he apparently took of Matilda, and Mrs. Montague having made an appointment to meet a party at the opera, immediately followed.

CHAP. IX.

Oh! when this tyrant doubt ſeizes our breaſts,
Our thoughts, like birds when frighted from their neſts,
Around the place where all was huſh'd before,
Flutter, and hardly ſettle more.

GENERAL CLEVELAND had, on his leaving India, diſpoſed of a conſiderable property to a Portugueſe merchant reſident at Liſbon: the ſudden death of that perſon happening about this time, rendered it neceſſary that the General ſhould

ſhould be preſent to claim the diſcharge of the ſum owed to him; his health was, however, too indifferent to undertake ſuch a journey, and Henry was obliged to make immediate preparations for his departure to Portugal. His principal ſource of uneaſineſs at this ſudden order was the ſituation in which he was obliged to leave Matilda. Whilſt he remained in London ſhe could never want a friend; but to leave her dependant on the capricious will of Mrs. Montague, at a time when he had diſcovered that he had created an affection in her innocent heart, was a thought too painful for reflection. To relieve thoſe diſagreeable doubts, he reſolved to have a private interview with Matilda; and for this purpoſe, muffling himſelf in a cloak, he, the night before his departure, repaired to

Mrs.

Mrs. Montague's;——fortunately that lady and her daughter were from home, and Matilda was alone in the drawing-room. On his entering, ſhe ſeemed ſurprized. "The nature of my buſineſs, "Miſs Oſmington," ſaid he, "will, I "hope extenuate this intruſion:——To-"to morrow I embark for Portugal;— "leave you, in my preſent uncertainty "of mind, would be intolerable; promiſe "me, then, that until my return, you will "not be the wife of any other."

The natural delicacy of Matilda's mind ſuggeſted to her the impropriety of ſecret promiſes from a young perſon of her ſex; but there was in the behaviour of Henry that chaſtened affection which ever conciliates eſteem; and ſhe heſitated not to relieve his anxiety by a promiſe,

promiſe, which her own heart ſo readily acceded to the performance of. This point gained, Henry requeſted that on receiving a letter from him, ſhe would anſwer it: to which Matilda, after ſome modeſt ſcruples, conſented. "God bleſs "you, Mr. Lenox," ſaid ſhe, as he roſe to depart.—"Heaven protect you, my Ma-"tilda," were his laſt words, as he preſſed her hand to his lips. At dinner the following day, Miſs Montague mentioned, that Mr. Lenox had ſailed for Portugal. "Did he bring his cheſnut mare with him?" ſaid the captain. "I ſuppoſe not," replied a gentleman ſitting next him, "for "in Portugal they generally ride mules "or aſſes." "Oh! demme," exclaimed the former, "I would not, on any account be "there." "Moſt likely, not," ſaid a young lady

lady on an oppoſite ſeat; "for there you "might dread the bridle."

Matilda was now ſeldom aſked to join the company below ſtairs; her dinner was ſerved in her own room; and altho' the inmate of a houſe which was conſtantly crowded with faſhionable viſitants ſhe lived in a retirement that admitted of meditation, even to madneſs. Reading was her only amuſement; and among the ſeveral new pamphlets which faſhion had made it neceſſary for Mrs. Montague to purchaſe, was an old Engliſh ſtory which pleaſed her; it was unadorned with the forced images or high-ſounding epithets of modern ballads, and was as follows:

ROMANCE.

The Foreſter's Daughter.

I.

DID you hear of a Foreſter,
That liv'd beneath the green wood tree;
He had an only daughter dear,
No lily flow'r more fair than ſhe.

II.

It chanc'd upon a ſummer's day,
While ſitting at her father's door,
A youth rode up, in rich array,
The like ſhe ne'er had ſeen before;

III.

A dancing plume wav'd o'er his head,
A ſilken robe behind him flow'd;
His hair was flaxen, and his face
With roſy health and beauty glow'd.

IV.

He ſtopped his horſe in ardent gaze:
'All peace betide thee, maid,' he cried,
'And wilt thou, fair one, come with me?
'And wilt thou be my blooming bride?'

V.

'Oh! ill 'twould ſuit a high-born youth,
'To make his bride of ſuch as me:
'Go, chuſe ſome dame of noble birth,
'And aſk me not to go with thee.'

VI.

'And what is wealth, or what is birth,
'Compar'd to beauty's native charms?
'I aſk no greater bliſs, than thus
'To claſp thee in my circling arms.

VII.

* * * * * *
* * * * * *

'Beſhrew

'Beſhrew the hapleſs hour that firſt
'I ſaw thy lovely flatt'ring face,
'Or heard the muſic of thy tongue,—
'That robb'd my virtue and my peace.'

VIII.

'Dry up thy tears, my gentle maid,
'Dry up thoſe tears, and ceaſe to mourn,
'To make my lawful bride of thee,
'Full ſoon again will I return.

IX.

'But if before I come again
'Thou ſhould'ſt a tender mother prove,
'Here, take this purſe and diamond ring,
'As tokens of my faithful love.'

X.

He ſaid—and ſpurr'd his ſorrel ſteed,
That ſwiftly thro' the green-wood flew—
Her ſtreaming eyes, with longing gaze,
His leſs'ning image cloſe purſue.

XI.

Five moons had gone their wonted round,
But yet no wiſh'd-for lover came;
The red-roſe faded on her cheek,
And plainer grew her virgin ſhame.

XII.

Her mother call'd her harlot bold,
Her father frown'd, but nothing ſaid;
And Roſa curs'd the luckleſs day
When firſt ſhe ceas'd to be a maid.

XIII.

And when ſhe bore a little babe
Her father turn'd her from his door;
He bid her ſeek her wanton love,
And view his injur'd face no more.

XIV.

The ſun ſhone bright, the morn was clear,
The feather'd ſongſters tun'd each ſpray,
When Roſa quit her father's roof,
And onward bent her wand'ring way.

XV.

And many a moſſy hill ſhe trod,
And many a ſlippy mountain's ſide,
' Till, weak and faint, ſhe ſtopp'd to reſt,
Cloſe by a ſilver river's tide.

XVI.

And here ſhe ſat, beneath a tree,
And ſlaked her thirſt in the cool ſtream;
And while ſhe preſs'd her ſmiling babe,
Forgot her anguiſh, grief, and ſhame.

XVII.

Before her roſe a verdant hill,
On which a ſtately caſtle ſtood,
And round its wide and rich domain
The river rolls its winding flood.

XVIII.

And while ſhe ſat, a gallant knight,
Arm'd cap-a-pie, with vizor down,
Came riding by, whoſe comely mien,
Beſpoke the wight of high renown.

XIX.

He ſtopp'd his horſe, 'In ſooth,' he cried,
'Methinks 'tis paſſing ſtrange to ſee
'A maid ſo fair and young as you
'Alone, beneath this ſpreading tree.'

XX.

'Oh! think not ſtrange, Sir Knight,' ſhe ſaid,
'For I have neither houſe nor home;
'A recreant youth my love betray'd,
'And caus'd me thus, forlorn, to roam.'

XXI.

'And who was he who could deceive
'Thy maiden love and virgin fame?'
'A fairer youth was ſeldom ſeen,
'But never did I hear his name.'

XXII.

'And did he leave no pledge of love?
'No friendly gift, or token dear?'
'O yes, he left this little ring,
'Which, ever, next my heart I wear.'

XXII.

'Then give me but that little ring,
'And thou ſhalt have this purſe of gold,'
'Ah! no; I ne'er would with it part,
'For all King Edward's treas'ries hold.'

XXIII.

'Then maiden, if thou'lt come with me,
'More kind and conſtant I will prove;
'I'll bring thee ſtraight to yon fair Hall,
'And thou ſhalt be my only love.'

XXV.

'Oh! how can I thy miſtreſs be?
'No ſecond flame my heart can feel;
'For tho' the falſe one prov'd unkind,
'Too dearly do I love him ſtill:

XXVI.

'But if thy heart ſoft pity feels,
'Take home this little babe with thee,
'And leave me here to die in woe,
'And end my grief and miſery.'

XXVII.

'Nay, lovely Roſa, live for me—'
He ſaid,—and rais'd his vizor high,
And ſhew'd that beauteous face, which erſt
Had won her heart, and charm'd her eye.

XXVIII.

'And could'ſt thou think, my ſoul's delight,
'That I'd a recreant falſe one prove;
'Thy virgin innocence betray,
'And baſely ſpurn thy artleſs love?—

XXIX.

'No,—'twas an arrow's rankling wound
'That caus'd me long to grieve and pine;
'But now reſtor'd to health, I hied
'With anxious love, to make thee mine.

XXX.

'Then baniſh grief, my faireſt Roſa,
'The Earl of Merrion is my name;
'Yon caſtle owns me for its lord,
'And thou ſhalt be its beauteous dame.'

XXXI

XXXI.

Tho' fortune ſmil'd on Roſa's fate,
Yet, maidens, ne'er be over kind,
Leſt you ſhould find, (perhaps *too late*)
That Hymen is not often blind.

THREE weeks after the departure of Henry, Matilda received a ſummons from Mrs. Montague, to attend her in her dreſſing-room. "Miſs Oſmington," ſaid ſhe, addreſſing her with cool civility, "we have received an invitation to ſpend "ſome time at the country-ſeat of Lord "Kingſland: This houſe is to be ſhut up "until our return; and I cannot bring a "ſtranger, unaſked, to his lordſhip's:— "however, as I promiſed your poor mother "to act towards you as a benefactreſs, I "here preſent you with £40.—a woman "who was once an attendant in our family "keeps furniſhed lodgings in the Strand,

"and if you chuſe to take them, my car-
"riage is at your ſervice to convey you
"this evening to her houſe." This was a thunder ſtroke to Matilda.——To excite the pity of Mrs. Montague, ſhe knew would be impracticable; and, a ſecond time to be thrown, defenceleſs, on the world, without even the former cheering ray of hope which illumined the dark proſpects of her life, was a thought that wrung her heart. She thanked her for the many obligations that her kindneſs had conferred on her, and ſubmitted to her dictatorial arrangement with a melancholy preſage of enſuing diſtreſs.—— The evening arrived,—Matilda, after receiving a cold ſalute from Mrs. Montague, and a ſtiff bend from the haughty Julia, prepared to depart; on the ſtairs ſhe was met by Captain Montague:——

"Are

"Are you going away, Offy?" ſaid he.—She courtſeyed.——"Demme, that's all "Julia's doing;" and, without further noticing her, he paſſed on.

The woman with whom Matilda was now become a reſident, was a widow, whoſe ſole ſupport for herſelf and two children, was the profit ariſing from her lodging-houſe.——She was pleaſed with the prepoſſeſſing ſweetneſs of Matilda, whoſe preſent ſituation, were it not for the diſagreeable reflections of the future, would be much preferable to her late reſidence.

She was no longer pained with that dependant miſerable gentility, which, from a more frequent admiſſion to ſuperior ſociety, forces compariſons on

ſwer would be brought;—'twas a painful interim, to Matilda. In a few minutes ſhe received a ſummons to attend the lady. Never was figure more faſcinating than that which roſe to receive her:—to a perſon uncommonly elegant, and a face exquiſitely beautiful, were added all the delicate touches that art could beſtow. After a moſt gracious reception from Mrs. Danvers, (that was her name) Matilda again mentioned the purport of her viſit. Mrs. Danvers politely expreſſed a wiſh to know her recommendations.—Matilda, with a bluſh of deep confuſion, confeſſed that ſhe was not then provided with any. "It matters not," replied the "lady that face is a letter of recommenda-"tion, too legible to be miſunderſtood; I "demand no other teſtimony:—my cha-"riot ſhall call for you about this time to-"morrow;

the table; on glancing her eye over it, ſhe took notice of an advertiſement that caught her attention; it was from a lady that wanted a female companion, of genteel manners, and good character. A ſcheme inſtantly occurred to her without mentioning her intention to Mrs. Bland, ſhe determined to wait on the lady, and accordingly, the next day about twelve o'clock, having dreſſed with uncommon care, ſhe proceeded to the houſe ſpecified in the advertiſement; it was at the court end of the town, and ſeemed the reſidence of a perſon of rank; her heart palpitated exceedingly, as ſhe applied her hand to the rapper, ſhe almoſt wiſhed herſelf at home again: having ſent up her buſineſs, in a billet which ſhe delivered to the footman, ſhe was ſhewn into a front parlour, until an an-

CHAP. X.

The fleece that once imbibes the dyer's ſtain,
Can ne'er again its native whiteneſs gain.

MRS. Danvers was the only child of a gentleman who held an honourable court employment: ſhe was early taught every ornamental branch of faſhionable education, and her doating parent beheld with delight in his Louiſa, a form on which nature had beſtowed every faſcinating charm, joined to a mind adorned with the

the moſt poliſhed, but ſuperficial graces; ſuch was Louiſa Mordant, the toaſt of the houſehold and the envy of ladies of honour; when the diſcovery of an intrigue with a married nobleman, blighted the golden proſpects of her youth, and brought the grey hairs of an aged parent to an untimely grave. There was a conſtitutional voluptuouſneſs in her diſpoſition, in the gratification of which ſhe ſoon forgot the loſs of character and parent; accepted the ſplendid offer of a young peer, and accompanied him to Paris, where; by the magnificence of their eſtabliſhment, their levees were ſoon crouded by groupes of dancing abbes, gambling marchioneſſes, and ſtarving chevaliers of St. Louis. A maſqued ball was given by the Counte De Marſange, for which Louiſa, by the intereſt

intereſt of her ciciſbeo, procured a ticket: the habit ſhe adopted was that of a woodnymph, as beſt calculated to ſhew to advantage a ſhape which ſtatuaries might be proud to copy. Shortly after her entering the rooms, ſhe was ſingled out to dance an eſcapade with the Duke Della Vernalde, a young Italian, whom ſhe had previouſly ſeen at the opera. The eyes of the whole company were turned on a couple evidently the moſt handſome in the aſſembly.—Louiſa's movements were enchanting; as ſhe gaily tripped on the light fantaſtic toe, ſhe ſeemed a grace perſonified. The next day ſhe received, in the abſence of her lover, a viſit from the Duke; he talked of the richneſs of his palaces, the number of his eſtates, and the ſplendor of his eſtabliſhments; theſe,

theſe, aided by a perſon glowing with animation and manly beauty, compleated the conqueſt of Louiſa: and having collected all her jewels and portable articles of value, ſhe the next night ſet off for Italy with her new lover, leaving Lord Everton to curſe his folly, and return to his native country with an empty purſe. The enamoured pair ſtopped at Genoa, where the Duke mentioned to Louiſa his having ſome acquaintance, whom he propoſed viſiting early the next morning, previous to their departure.—Louiſa roſe late, and ſuppoſing that the Duke, on his coming in, would conduct her to the public buildings worthy of notice, went to provide a neceſſary change of apparel, when, to her utter aſtoniſhment, all her trunks were removed. She did not

ſpeak

ſpeak Italian ſufficiently to be underſtood, but a French waiter of the hotel informed her, that the gentleman with whom ſhe travelled, had, at five o'clock in the morning, ſet off with all the baggage in a voiturin, he knew not which road, and that he was well known at the different auberges as a noted adventurer, who aſſumed the titles of ſeveral Italian noblemen.

Louiſa's condition was deplorable; left in a ſtrange country, without money, clothes, or one ſingle acquintance; but her's was not a mind that ſunk under difficulties: on inquiring if any Engliſh were in the city, ſhe found there was a baronet and his retinue, who had juſt arrived on his way from home. She immediately waited on her countryman, whoſe

whoſe name was Sir Richard Savage, related a tale of plauſible diſtreſs which was liſtened to by Sir Richard incredulouſly, who ſwore he never heard ſuch a pack of lies from ſo lovely a mouth in all his life; and Louiſa from that period became his chere amie. Two months had ſcarcely elapſed before ſhe was tired and diſguſted with her ſituation. Her feminine ſeductive blandiſhments were entirely loſt on him; groſs ſenſuality alone was his principal enjoyment; his fondneſs was irkſome, his diſpleaſure brutal: her perſonal beauty was her only claim to his love, 'if love it might be called, which love had none;' but he was liberal, and Louiſa, in amaſſing a conſiderable ſum from his purſe, conſoled herſelf for other inconveniences.—After an abſence of three years, ſhe returned

turned to her native England with Sir Richard, and accompanied him to his ſeat in Wiltſhire, where he ſoon after eſpouſed the romping daughter of a neighbouring 'ſquire, and Louiſa, with a handſome ſalary, was again left to act for herſelf.—Experience had taught her cunning; and for the purpoſe of accompliſhing her ſchemes, ſhe immediately proceeded to London, that venal mart of luxury and beauty. Having ſet up an elegant equipage, ſhe aſſumed the name of Danvers, paſſed for the widow of an officer, and amongſt ſeveral viſitors, who bowed to the ſhrine of her beauty, ſhe was particularly noticed by the Earl of Falmant, a debilitated old rake of quality, whoſe vices had long ſurvived his conſtitution and youth. A ſhort acquaintance with him ſerved

to

to develope his character. Weak, fickle, and vain, ſatiety with him was ever the concomitant of a gratified wiſh; but his rank, his munificence, were ſuperior to any other of her male friends, and Mrs. Danvers found that her intereſt was concerned in adminiſtering to his pleaſures: to diverſify thoſe pleaſures ſhe knew was the only method of continuing his favour. Vice was not with her the momentary impulſe of ſtrong paſſion, her's was ſyſtematic wickedneſs: ſhe adopted the plan of advertiſing for female companions, and amid the ſeveral who offered themſelves, choſe thoſe whoſe appearance beſt anſwered her infamous purpoſe; two young women had already been ruined by her gradual machinations, and

it

it was the lot of Matilda to be the next ſacrifice intended for ſeduction.

On removing to Mrs. Danvers's houſe, ſhe was daily more pleaſed with the ſpecious decorum and kind behaviour with which ſhe was treated. It was now two months ſince Henry's departure, and although ſhe had ſeveral times ſent to inquire for the promiſed letter at Mrs. Montague's, her inquiries were all fruitleſs.—There was an inobtruſive gentleneſs in the temper of Matilda, that like the violet, which bends its modeſt head from the view, ſhrunk from the advances of flattery or admiration; her affections were ſolely devoted to Lenox, and as ſhe conſidered herſelf equally ſecure in his regards, ſhe was perfectly indifferent about the admiration of others. This

temper

temper Mrs. Danvers found much more difficult to manage than either of Matilda's unfortunate predeceſſors; they had a leading weakneſs, a favorite propenſity, which in ſome meaſure paved the way to their own ruin; far different was her diſpoſition. To prevent any ſuſpicion ariſing ſo ſoon in her mind, Mrs. Danvers had taken particular care that ſhe ſhould always retire early. Lord Falmont was introduced to her as the near relation of Mrs. Danvers, and the grey hairs of that venerable looking man, who was preſented to her view, were calculated to command the reſpect of that artleſs creature, who little knew the heart of depravity which they covered.

In uncertainty we are often apt to ſuppoſe that circumſtances are as we would

would wiſh them, and it was thus that Matilda endeavoured to reconcile to her mind Henry's unaccountable ſilence. His letters poſſibly had miſcarried; important buſineſs might have prevented his inclination of writing, and ſhe began anxiouſly to await the time when he would perſonally be able to account for his ſilence. She had now reſided a month with Mrs. Danvers, and was ſomewhat ſurpriſed that a woman ſo eminently qualified to adorn the moſt poliſhed ſociety, was never viſited by any female acquaintance. Mrs. Danvers had in ſome meaſure accounted for this by mentioning her intention of going ſo ſhortly to reſide in the country, that it would be uſeleſs to form any acquaintance in town.

One fine day Mrs. Danvers having ordered the carriage, in company with Matilda, drove to Kenſington; the gardens were crouded; Matilda obſerved that the gentlemen ſtared at her with the rudeſt familiarity. Hurt at being the object of ſuch public ſcrutiny, ſhe clung to the arm of Mrs. Danvers, and turning down a different walk, was met by two ladies with whom ſhe had formed a ſlight acquaintance at Mrs. Montague's; ſhe curtſied—a crimſon fluſh overſpread the cheek of each as they turned indignantly from her, without deigning to notice her ſalute; this was obſerved by Mrs. Danvers, who conſented to Matilda's earneſt entreaty to depart: they had juſt reached the carriage, when a footman coming up to Matilda, told her that his lady requeſted that ſhe would never again

attempt to notice her, as otherwiſe would adopt a diſagreeable alterna Matilda's aſtoniſhment at ſuch a mel was exceſſive; ſhe mentioned it to M Danvers, who laughed at her thinl ſeriouſly of ſuch an inſtance of lit minded vanity, and, aſſigning a plau reaſon to quiet her ſuſpicions, told he diſpel her preſent groundleſs ennui, ſhe would take her to an exhibitio pictures.—The innocent heart of Mat overflowed with gratitude to her be factreſs at this inſtance of delicate tention.

A few evenings after Mrs. Dan propoſed accompanying Matilda to theatre; the play was Shakeſpear's gedy of Romeo and Juliet. Mat was delighted with Holman's inimit performa

performance of Romeo; the full-toned melody of his voice, aided by a face of manly beauty, and on which nature had indelibly ſtamped the gentleman, all conſpired to give uncommon intereſt and pathos to the character. At the end of the ſecond act her attention was called from the ſtage by Mrs. Danvers remarking to her a lovely young fellow who ſat in an oppoſite box; an involuntary exclamation burſt from Matilda at diſcovering it to be Lenox; he was engaged in converſation with a young lady, richly dreſſed—it was Lady Frances Delvin. "Do you know him?" ſaid Mrs. Danvers. "I have ſeen him at "Mrs. Montague's," ſaid Matilda, with difficulty endeavouring to ſpeak; juſt then her eye caught that of Henry as he was handing an orange to Lady Frances.

There was a contemptuous pity in his look as he gazed on her, and averting his face he reſumed, with apparent gaiety, his attention to his fair companion; this was too much for Matilda—ſhe complained of a head-ache, tottered towards the box door, and fainted: on being brought to the air ſhe recovered, and when ſeated in the carriage a flood of tears gave relief to the anguiſh that ſwelled her heart.

CHAP. XI.

LENOX's firſt care, on his arrival at Liſbon, was to write to Matilda. This letter arrived a fortnight after ſhe had quitted Mrs. Montague's, to whoſe houſe it was directed, and was delivered to Miſs Montague previous to their departure from London. Convinced, from the poſt mark, that Matilda's correſpondent was no other than Lenox, ſhe immediately carried the packet to her own room, where, breaking open the

ſeal, ſhe read, with bitter mortification, a repetition of thoſe vows of conſtant affection which he had ſo lately, in perſon, made to Matilda. Although Henry's behaviour to herſelf afforded little hope to her inclination for him, ſtill this ardent demonſtration of his love for one whom ſhe conſidered ſo much beneath her, gave a deeper wound to her vanity than even his indifference.

Conſigning the paper to the flames, and drying the tears that had forced a paſſage through her eye-lids, ſhe went down to the drawing room to receive ſome viſitants—they were the ladies who a few hours before, had met Matilda at Kenſington, accompanied by Mrs. Danvers, and had now called purpoſely to mention the circumſtance to Mrs. Montague.

tague. That lady heard the information with more ſurpriſe than concern—declared it was ſhocking that ſhe had ever permitted ſuch a wretch to be an inmate of her houſe; and proceeded compoſedly to relate the arrangement of her intended journey. Far differently was the intelligence received by Miſs Montague; a fiend-like pleaſure aroſe in her mind on having it ſo completely in her power to wound the peace of Lenox; ſhe that evening wrote an anonymous letter to Henry, purporting that Miſs Oſmington had voluntarily quitted the protection of Mrs. Montague, and had taken up her reſidence with a noted courtezan, where ſhe received the viſits of ſeveral young men of faſhion. This epiſtle ſhe diſpatched on the night before ſhe left town.

Various were the ſenſations of Henry on receipt of this letter; that ſhe whom he had left virtuous and innocent ſhould ſuddenly ſink into ſuch meretricious wantonneſs, ſeemed to him almoſt impoſſible; and yet what other reaſon could be aſſigned for her unaccountable ſilence?

The buſineſs in which he was engaged he found more tedious than at firſt he ſuppoſed; but having in the courſe of the following month arranged his affairs, he embarked for England. It was too late when he arrived at his grandfather's to call at Mrs. Montague's. The General was overjoyed to ſee him;—told him that he had at length found out a young lady for him, with whom he was certain he ſhould be pleaſed; Henry bowed—

obſerved

obſerved that he was fatigued, and retired.

At ten o'clock the following day he went to Mrs. Montague's; that family were ſtill in the country, and the only information he could obtain from the female domeſtic who attended him was, that Miſs Oſmington had quitted her miſtreſs ſhortly before her going to the country, and had gone, ſhe heard, as companion to ſome lady in the city; Henry was returning when he was met by a young templar of his acquaintance. "I am going," ſaid the gentleman, "to "the Exhibition of Paintings—you "muſt accompany me." Henry conſented. The rooms were crouded on their entrance; ſome of the paintings

were capitally executed. Lenox's eyes were fixed on a groupe of robbers, by Spagnioletto. "Look," ſaid his companion, "there is the moſt beautiful "impure in town; that lovely modeſt-"looking girl that accompanies her is "quite a new face." Henry directed his eyes towards the woman, the face of the youngeſt was averted, but ſuddenly turning round to her companion, he diſcovered it to be Matilda!——

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A ſickly tremor overſpread his frame at a ſight which conveyed ſuch inconteſtible truth—ſuch damning evidence. —He apologized to his friend for his haſty departure, threw himſelf into a chair,

chair, and was carried home in a ſtate of mind nearly bordering on diſtraction.—On ſhutting himſelf up in his chamber, and endeavouring to recall his ſcattered ſenſes, his firſt reſolution was to baniſh all remembrance of the graceleſs recreant from his heart; and to prove that no veſtige of his former ill-judged paſſion remained, he determined immediately to aſſent to any matrimonial propoſal which his grandfather might think fit to offer.

After thus forcing himſelf into a temporary compoſure, he deſcended to dinner. The cloth had been ſcarcely removed when the General renewed the converſation of laſt night;—mentioned his having communicated his ſcheme to the Earl of Delvin, father of the lady, who gave it the moſt warm approbation;

that a concert was given by Lady Frances Delvin that evening, at which he would introduce him. Henry, after ſwallowing a bumper to Lady Frances, conſented, and at ten o'clock that night was conducted to the houſe of Lord Delvin. A circle of lounging dilletanti had collected round the chair of Lady Frances;—ſhe was about twenty-two, a brunette, with eyes black and piercing, and a ſmile of ſelf-complacency was diffuſed over her features, that heightened the luxuriant expreſſion of her countenance. Such a face was little calculated to ſtrike Henry's taſte, but he was determined to think her a paragon, and ſucceeded ſo far in his attention to her that the General was highly pleaſed with the ſucceſs of his project.

Henry,

Henry, on returning home, began to feel that all his laboured exertions to baniſh Matilda from his thoughts were factitious; ſpite of every effort, her image would ſtill riſe to his fancy, adorned with all thoſe intereſting graces that firſt arreſted his affections. Great as was the influence which he knew ſhe once poſſeſſed over his heart, ſtill greater did he find it, on endeavouring to baniſh her from his mind; but ſhe was now beyond the pale of virtue—ſhe had openly connected herſelf with vice; and he determined to conquer a paſſion whoſe object he conſidered unworthy of future attention.

Mrs. Danvers, who, on her return from the theatre, narrowly watched

Matilda's

Matilda's countenance, in which was too plainly pourtrayed the anguiſh of her ſoul, artfully diſguiſed her curioſity under the ſemblance of pity; and having gleaned from her that he who was apparently the cauſe of ſuch uneaſineſs was one dear to her, ſhe began to reflect on the neceſſity of haſtening her diabolical plan. Matilda's ſuſpicions ſhe ſaw would (if not already) ſoon be awakened by the altered behaviour of her acquaintance to her while in company with herſelf. Theſe circumſtances ſhe mentioned to her noble co-adjutor on his next viſit, who immediately aſſented to the ſpeedy proſecution of their embryo intentions.

After a night of ſleepleſs inquietude

Matilda

Matilda roſe pale and dejected. "You "look unwell, my dear girl," ſaid Mrs. Danvers on beholding her. "My "head aches diſagreeably, Madam," replied Matilda. "Well, to-morrow we "ſet off for my country lodge; by the "way I propoſe to ſpend a few days at "my couſin Manſell's ſeat, and I truſt "that change of ſcene and air will en-"tirely reſtore your health to its uſual "tone." Matilda returned a grateful acknowledgment for this additional inſtance of kindneſs.

This journey was the only circumſtance from which ſhe could hope for any alleviation of her preſent ſorrow. London no longer poſſeſſed any charms for her; and as ſhe reflected on the tiſſue of misfortunes which it was her lot to experi-

experience, a guſh of tears filled her eyes, which ſhe endeavoured to conceal by turning to the window; at that inſtant a ſplendid equipage, attended by ſeveral ſervants, ſtopped at an oppoſite houſe, from which an elderly gentleman alighted—ſhe had a full view of his face—it was pale and languid—mental ſorrow was legibly ſtamped in the deep furrows of his grief-worn countenance. Misfortune is not mine excluſively, thought ſhe as ſhe turned her eye from the ſtranger's emaciated viſage;—deep muſt be that ſtate of mental wretchedneſs which can receive no relief from compariſon. "What doſt thou muſe "on, meditating maid?" ſaid Mrs. Danvers, ſmilingly approaching Matilda, "Oh, gemmini! tis a coach." "To "whom does it belong?" aſked the latter.

latter. "To a pompous old baronet "of Soho, Sir George Belgrave—have "you ſeen him before?" "Yes," ſaid ſhe, inarticulately.

At ſix o'clock that evening Mrs. Danvers mentioning that ſhe would be obliged to ſtay out late in arranging ſome buſineſs previous to their enſuing journey, departed to the houſe of her noble friend to acquaint him with the regulations ſhe had adopted.

Mrs. Danvers had a handſome footman, to whoſe perſonal perfections ſhe was not inſenſible, and to whom ſhe had intruſted the tranſaction of ſeveral affairs of honour. It happened that a female domeſtic, ſmitten with the fine figure of Mr.

Mr. Thomas, had long beheld the contempt with which he returned her paſſion. Love is not blind when diſappointed. Mary ſoon obſerved the mutual underſtanding which ſubſiſted between her miſtreſs and Thomas, and determined to avail herſelf of the moment when chance might furniſh her with the means of revenge; the wary caution of Mrs. Danvers, however, ſeemed to preclude all hope, when that evening happening to be adjuſting a cloſet inſide her miſtreſs's room, the door of which was ſhut, when the latter and Thomas entered; Mary applied her ear to the key hole, and heard the propoſed regulations reſpecting Matilda.

Scarcely had Mrs. Danvers driven from

from the door when Mary, foaming with jealous rage, came running to Miſs Oſmington, who was ſitting in the drawing room. "Do you want me, Mary?" ſaid ſhe, ſomewhat ſurprized at her vehemence. "Yes, ma'am, I'm come to "let you know that Mrs. Danvers is "the worſt of women, and intends to "ruin you:—you are to be brought to-"morrow to that old lord's houſe that "ſhe calls her couſin, but he is no more "her couſin than I am: and there, "ma'am, Thomas and Mrs. Danvers "will leave you to his mercy."

Conviction flaſhed on Matilda's mind: "Protector of Innocence!" ſaid ſhe, claſping her hands in an agony of deſpair, "what—what will become of me?—"what ſhall I do?" "Do, why run

"away

" away and diſappoint them, to be ſure," replied the girl. " I have no home— " no aſylum to turn to." " Have you " no friend or relation?" " I will " try," ſaid ſhe; and hurrying on her cloak ran into the ſtreet:—the night was dark and rainy, but deſpair gave her additional courage.

After paſſing unmoleſted through ſeveral ſtreets ſhe arrived at the houſe of her uncle; on inquiry if he was at home, ſhe was anſwered rudely by the porter that ſhe could not ſee him then, and the door was ſhut inſtantly. Deſtruction now ſeemed inevitable—every cheering thought was extinguiſhed, and ſhe clung to the paliſadoes in ſpeechleſs agony, when a gentleman ſtopped at the door, and ſurveying her by the light of a lamp, aſked

aſked her if ſhe was unwell. "Oh, "Sir, I intreat you," ſaid ſhe, "by "all you hold dear and ſacred, to gain "me a momentary conference with "Sir George Belgrave." He ſeemed affected by her earneſtneſs, and ordering the ſervant to permit her to remain in the hall, proceeded to acquaint Sir George; but the terror of a ſecond repulſe operated ſo ſtrongly on her, that, ruſhing into the room which ſhe ſaw him enter, and kneeling at the feet of Sir George, ſobbed out, "Oh! Sir!— "Uncle!—ſave me from miſery—from "proſtitution!"

She had ſcarcely pronounced theſe words, when a faintiſh ſickneſs oppreſſed her, and ſhe ſunk lifeleſs on the floor. "It muſt be ſo," ſaid Sir George, gazing

gazing mournfully over her; "ſhe is "the child of my poor Harriet."

On recovery Matilda found herſelf ſupported by her uncle, who, in the kindeſt accents, bade her be comforted.

CHAP. XII.

Farewell, a long farewell to all my greatneſs:
This is the ſtate of man—to-day he puts forth
The tender leaves of hope, to-morrow bloſſoms,
And bears his bluſhing honours thick upon him;
The third day comes a froſt—a killing froſt.

SHAKESPEARE.

SICKNESS, ſorrow, and diſappointment had ſoftened Sir George's once rugged heart. He married a peereſs in her own right, lovely in mind and perſon, but, like a flower withered in all the fragrance of early bloom, ſhe died two years after her marriage, leaving a ſon too young to feel the loſs of the angelic being

being to whom he owed his exiſtence. The grief of Sir George, who adored her, was outrageous. Violent in all his mental affections, he clung to the breathleſs corpſe till forcibly torn from it; and ſeveral weeks ſhut himſelf up in his chamber, to which none but his own ſervants were admitted. As his ſorrow began to ſubſide, his affection ſeemed to concentrate in his infant ſon, now Lord Walbrook, whoſe features bore a ſtrong reſemblance to thoſe of his mother.—When he had arrived at the age of ſeven his health being then too delicate to be entruſted to a public ſeminary, ſuitable inſtructors were provided at home by his father, who delighted to be preſent at his lectures; and as he marked the early ſparks of genius which ſhone in the mind of his darling, he looked forward with proud

proud exultation to the time, when he might behold him the admiration of the ſenate, or the ornament of the cabinet. A company of ſtrolling players having erected a ſtage in a neighbouring village, Lord Walbrook requeſted permiſſion to ſee their performance, and his father, ever ready to gratify his moſt trivial wiſh, conſented. The cold of the houſe affected the conſtitution of the child, naturally weak; he complained of a headache, was carried home unwell, and in three days after expired.

Blighted in all his views of happineſs, deprived of all his ſoul held dear, Sir George's haughty ſpirit was at length broken by misfortune; a nervous fever ſeized him, which for a conſiderable time threatened an exiſtence he no longer va-

lued. During a lingering recovery of ſeveral months, his former cruelty to his widowed ſiſter recurred to his mind, and to repair, by every means in his power, thoſe injuries and diſtreſſes to which he had ſo much contributed, he commiſſioned a perſon to ſeek out the retreat of Mrs. Oſmington, determining, if ſhe refuſed to reſide with himſelf, to ſettle on her an independant annuity. Here again he was doomed to diſappointment; the intelligence he received was, that Mrs. Oſmington had been ſeveral months dead, and that Matilda was gone to reſide with ſome lady in London. The only perſon who could give him any direction reſpecting her was Mr. Grey, and he, unfortunately, at that time was in Scotland. Thus fruſtrated in every purſuit, and labouring under a broken conſtitution, Sir George,

George, at fifty-eight, found himſelf a ſolitary being, deriving pain from thoſe very ſources on which he had founded all his proſpects of happineſs. He had been appointed guardian to the ſon of an old acquaintance, who poſſeſſed a large fortune; his name was Maitland. With an animated face, and a perſon light and elegant, Maitland added a heart that did honour to its owner. His mind, lively and ſuſceptible, was too frequently led away by his eye, and beauty was ever ſure to find in him an ardent, though fickle admirer. It was him to whom Matilda addreſſed herſelf at Sir George's door. Anxious as was her uncle to hear the circumſtances of Matilda's ſudden introduction, he would not permit her to recite them that night, as her ſpirits

ſeemed too much perturbed for ſo arduous a taſk.

The next morning, having aroſe more early than uſual, he deſcended to the library, and having ſent for Matilda, ſhe related the events that befel her.—"I ſee," ſaid he, when ſhe had ended, "that our firſt neceſſary ſtep ſhould be, "to acquaint that infamous female, with "what protector you are at preſent "placed; and next, that it would be more "proper in your preſent circumſtances, to "reſide for a ſhort time with ſome lady, "whoſe rank and character will ſecure "you from any malevolent aſperſions. I "have ſuch a friend, and to-morrow will "introduce her to you." Matilda lifted her eyes, ſtreaming with gratitude, to the face of her uncle, and looked her thanks.

thanks. They were ſoon after joined by Maitland. He ſeemed overjoyed at the ſatisfaction which unbent the care-worn forehead of Sir George. He beheld with admiration the Madona face of Matilda, and by the ſprightlineſs of his converſation, and ſallies of harmleſs wit, promoted the chearfulneſs of the little party.——"That's a good lad," ſaid Sir George, as Maitland went out; "he is in "ſome reſpects inconſiderate, but I am "ſure, would prove an excellent huſ-"band."—Matilda ſighed; took up a book that lay on the table, and was attentively peruſing a blank leaf, when the announcing of ſome gentlemen put a ſtop to the tete-a-tete.

The next day, Sir George, accompanied by Matilda, drove to Lady Groſ-

venor's. Striking was the contraſt between her preſent reception, and that which ſhe experienced from Mrs. Montague, then a poor dependant ſtranger, without friends, without protectors, ſcarcely admitted into the door of the only perſon on whom her hope reſted; —now, the acknowledged heireſs of an opulent baronet; ſurrounded with all the inſignia of rank and affluence, and preceded by a couple of bowing footmen, conducted to the preſence of lady Groſvenor, who received her with the moſt flattering politeneſs. Sir George explained the nature of his viſit to her ladyſhip. She not only approved the plan, but ſeemed pleaſed with ſo diſtinguiſhing a mark of his eſteem, and Matilda became a welcome inmate of Lady Groſvenor's family:—It conſiſted of two daughters; the

the elder of whom, like many other London miſſes of quality, was poſſeſſed of no prominent outline of character, and might be called negatively well-bred,—that is, ſhe was not vulgar. Emily Groſvenor, the younger daughter, was a ſmart, handſome girl, who talked on every ſubject of faſhionable diſcuſſion with flippancy, was told ſhe was witty, and took it for granted, without examining the truth of the aſſertion.

Matilda, on her firſt introduction to theſe young ladies, was more pleaſed with the playful familiarity of Emily than the mawkiſh ſtillneſs of Miſs Groſvenor; who, in imitation of Lady ****, pronounced her words in a tone between a whine and a drone, and kept her eyes

half ſhut, that ſhe might ſeem irreſiſtibly languiſhing.

When Matilda had retired to her apartment, the image of Lenox (which the late rapid ſucceſſion of events had partly ſuppreſſed in her mind) aroſe in her fancy:——although unable to account for his ſilence while abroad, his ſubſequent conduct ſhe conſidered partly excuſable;——he had ſeen her the aſſociate of an abandoned woman; appearances were ſtrongly againſt her; but that he, who had not only voluntarily acknowledged, but alſo ſeemed to feel a ſincere and delicate affection, ſhould, without inveſtigation of circumſtances, ſo ſoon attach himſelf to another, was a reflection painful to her heart.

With

With a mind liſtleſs and uneaſy, ſhe aroſe the next morning, and could hardly aſſume ſufficient compoſure to meet the family at breakfaſt.

"Bleſs me, my dear," (cried Emily) "where have you left your complexion?" "Surely, Emily," ſaid Miſs Groſvenor, ſimpering, "you don't inſinuate that Miſs "Oſmington rouges?"—"What a ſtrange "concluſion, Charlotte:——I only want-"ed to know, whether the night-mare, or "love, or a tight night-cap, had robbed "my friend of her uſual bloom?"

Matilda, by forcing a ſmile, endeavoured to conceal the deep bluſh which this remark had given riſe to; and retired for a ſhort time to her apartment, where ſhe endeavoured to re-compoſe

her perturbed ſpirits, by the peruſal of the following

RONDEAU.

FLIGHTS OF FANCY.

I.

DRYAD Nymphs and Fairy train,
Cluſt'ring round in ſocial ring,
Liſten, while in merry ſtrain,
I my wanton frolics ſing:

II.

When the firſt tint of roſy dawn
Illumes the bluſhing Eaſtern ſky,
I quit the flower-dappled lawn,
And high on glitt'ring pinions fly

III.

O'er mountains ſteep, and lowland vale,
Where king cups ſpring, with gay hawthorn,
O'er darken'd wood and op'ning dale,
Fann'd by the dewy breath of morn:

IV.

IV.

And oft I dip my flutt'ring wings
At noon, where bluſhing Naiads' charms,
Amid ſome lonely chryſtal ſprings,
Allure me to their beauteous arms.

V.

And when the ſun's departing rays
Gild the wide ſurface of the main,
I dance in ſportive winding maze,
With green-hair'd ſea-nymphs' jocund train.

VI.

Where oft we tune our ev'ning ſong
In choral ſtrains, which, ſweet and clear,
Borne by the ſtill calm breeze along,
Steal ſoftly o'er the ſailor's ear.

VII.

Amaz'd, he hears the witching ſound,
Far diſtant from the miſty ſhore,
That floats in melody around,
Now ſinking low, is heard no more.

VIII.

When night-ſhades o'er old Ocean creep,
Back to the dewy mead I fly,
Where ſinking ſoft to downy ſleep,
In the lily's bell I lie.

IX.

Dryad Nymphs and Fairy train,
Cluſt'ring round in ſocial ring,
Liſten, while in merry ſtrain,
I my wanton frolics ſing.

CHAP. XIII.

HENRY, who had miſtaken a temporary impulſe of reſentment for the conqueſt of his paſſion, was daily more averſe to the manners and ſociety of Lady Frances: her coquettiſh, affected behaviour was little calculated to ſtrike his taſte, or fix his heart. While her ladyſhip, early taught to conſider rank and fortune as the acme of conjugal felicity, ſpent not a moment's conſideration on the nameleſs ſympathies, the mutual affections ſo neceſſary to conſtitute the permanent happineſs

pineſs of beings, whoſe joys and ſorrows ſhould be alike interwoven. She, therefore, in receiving the addreſſes of Lenox, felt only the trivial ſatisfaction of making conqueſt of one, whoſe manly beauty and ſplendid proſpects rendered him worthy of her choice.

Henry, a few evenings after his introduction at Lord Delvin's, accompanied Lady Frances to the Theatre, where, as before mentioned, he, a ſecond time, obſerved Matilda:——he thought ſhe looked more beautiful,—more engaging than ever;——but ſhe is loſt to me, ſaid he, mentally, and turned haſtily away. He ſtruggled to appear cheerful the remainder of the night; and on returning home, determined, the next day to viſit Matilda.——"I will go to her," ſaid he, "ſhe

" ſhe may, probably, hearken to my ad-
" vice, and it may be yet in my power to
" reſcue her from a farther continuation of
" guilt." With this determination he aroſe, and after arguing himſelf into all the compoſure which the nature of his viſit would admit, he at two o'clock repaired to the houſe of Mrs. Danvers, of whom, previous to proceeding, it is neceſſary we ſhould give an account, after the flight of Matilda:——She went out that even-ing, and did not return till late: on in-quiring if Miſs Oſmington had retired to her chamber, ſhe was anſwered in the af-firmative. Matilda's travelling trunk lay in the hall: after ordering it to be ſafely corded, and the carriage to be ready by ſix o'clock the following morning, ſhe went to ruminate on the ſplendor which the purchaſe of Matilda's ruin would en-

able

able her to ſupport the enſuing winter.—Having dreſſed at the appointed hour, ſhe ſeemed ſurprized at Miſs Oſmington's delay, and ordered a female ſervant to haſten her. Mary, with well diſſembled aſtoniſhment, returned, declaring that ſhe was no where to be found!———Ever miſtreſs of diſſimulation, Mrs. Danvers concealed, under an appearance of indifference, the rage and diſappointment that tore her boſom. She immediately concluded, that Matilda muſt have received ſome private information relative to the ſchemes preparing againſt her;—but from what quarter this intelligence had been obtained, remained to her inexplicable. That it could originate with any of her own domeſtics ſeemed impoſſible, as they had all preſerved, on former occaſions of a ſimilar nature, a profound

ſilence.

ſilence. She waited on her employer, and broke to him, in the genteeleſt terms ſhe could aſſume, the flight of Matilda. His rage was exceſſive; he inſiſted that ſhe was the ſole cauſe of her departure, and ſwore that ſhe was leagued with ſome other perſon, to whom ſhe had given up the girl:——Being ſomewhat appeaſed by her ſtrong aſſeverations to the contrary, they agreed to advertiſe Matilda, ſtating her having eloped with jewels, and ſeveral valuables, and offering a reward for her apprehenſion; when, on Mrs. Danvers's return, ſhe received Sir George's letter, loading her with the moſt ſevere reprehenſions on her conduct, and containing a conſiderable encloſure, in compenſation for the time which Miſs Oſmington had ſpent at her houſe.——This put a final ſtop to all

their

their concerted procedures;——and thus ſituated was Mrs. Danvers, when Henry arrived at her door.——Having inquired of Miſs Ormington was at home, he was anſwered, that ſhe had left the houſe two days before. Perplexed and fruſtrated, he returned: when at the end of the ſtreet, he was addreſſed by a female, who ſeemed to have haſtily followed him:——"You have been inquiring, ſir, I think, for Miſs Ormington;"——"Yes," replied he, eagerly turning round. The perſon was Mary;——ſhe had been in the hall when Lenox called at Mrs. Danvers's, and concluded, from his appearance, that ſhe might influence his generoſity by a recital of what ſhe knew——nor was ſhe diſappointed. From her he learned the cauſe of Matilda's haſty flight; and from this account

count he perceived, that ſhe was more the unſuſpecting victim of hypocriſy, than a voluntary participator of its guilt; and to receive this intelligence, when ſhe was probably an unprotected wanderer, without one kind arm to ſnatch her from impending ruin——this gave him the moſt poignant anguiſh.

Splendid preparations, in the mean time, were commenced at Lady Groſvenor's, for a ball, to which ſeveral faſhionables were invited. Sir George, in a viſit he paid Matilda, preſented her with a ſuperb caſket of diamonds, which had belonged to Lady Walbrook:—— "Theſe," ſaid he, as he gave them to her, "*were* the property of one, whoſe beauty "conferred on them an additional luſtre, "and you are now the only object on "whom

"whom I could view them with plea-
"ſure."

Matilda, in ſome antecedent converſation, had mentioned to Lady Groſvenor, the imperious neceſſity which firſt obliged her to quit Mrs. Montague's. "We have "exchanged ſome viſits," ſaid her ladyſhip; "I will poſitively ſend her a card "for Thurſday, as ſhe came to town laſt "week; and I inſiſt, my deareſt Matilda, "that you will be dreſſed cap-a-pie on "that night." To this ſhe ſmilingly aſſented.

In the courſe of the day, Maitland called, and offering to conduct the ladies to a diſplay of ſome curious mechaniſm exhibited by a French emigré, they prepared to accompany him. On entering the

the apartments, they found them ſo crouded, that Maitland could with difficulty make room, 'till ſome gentlemen proffered their ſervices to Lady Groſvenor and Charlotte, while Emily and Matilda ſtill clung to his arm. As they paſſed through the anti-room, the latter obſerved Captain Montague in a corner of the apartment, ſpeaking in a low tone of voice to the very young lady in whoſe company ſhe had ſeen Lenox at the theatre. A painful emotion aroſe in her mind, and though eager to inquire her name, ſtill ſhe dreaded that the queſtion would betray her trepidation.——"He "is coming," ſaid the young lady, as they paſſed near them. Matilda noticed her ſuddenly to aſſume a ſmile, and exclaim, "I have given you infinite trouble, "Mr. Lenox." Henry approached, preſented

ſented her with ſomething, and taking her hand, led her to the exhibition room. Matilda was ready to faint.——Maitland perceiving her to tremble exceſſively, tenderly demanded if ſhe was unwell. "I "feel ſome inconvenience from the heat," ſaid ſhe, endeavouring to ſummon reſolution, "but Emily's ſalts will remove it." By ill luck Maitland conducted them to a ſeat directly oppoſite to that on which Lenox and the lady were ſeated. Emily nodded familiarly to the latter, who returned it with a ſmile:——Maitland, in a whiſper, demanded her name. "'Tis Lady Frances Delvin; but let not "her black eyes make any impreſſion on "your heart, as ſhe is immediately to be "married to that Gentleman beſide her." ——"Placed as I at preſent am," ſaid Maitland,

Maitland, " that caution is unneceſ-
" ſary."

Matilda, with painful attention, liſtened to this information, and ſtealing a look at Lenox, obſerved him gazing on her with uncommon earneſtneſs.——Her pride was hurt.——She addreſſed herſelf with apparent livelineſs to Maitland;——and, at the cloſe of the performance, accepted his proffered hand with an air of vivacity that entirely concealed the tumult of anguiſh that ſwelled in her boſom.

CHAP. XIV.

Wealth and ſplendor could not charm me,
Rank poſſeſs'd no lure for me;
Nor could aught of fear alarm me,
Save the fear of loſing thee.

HENRY, on receiving the information communicated by Mary, immediately proceeded to Mrs. Montague's, of whoſe arrival he had accidentally heard. ——A lady intimate with the Groſvenor family, in a viſit that morning, informed Mrs. Montague of Matilda's preſent ſituation, with the circumſtances which firſt introduced her to her uncle's notice; and this lady had juſt taken leave as

Henry

Henry entered.——" Deareſt Mr. Le-
" nox, only think what a piece of intelli-
" gence," ſaid Mrs. Montague, after the
uſual ſalutation,——" Matilda Oſming-
" ton is acknowledged, and taken into fa-
vour by her uncle."——" For her pro-
" per conduct while ſhe reſided in a bro-
" thel," ſaid Miſs Montague, ſneeringly.
——" Errors of innocence are juſtly
"more venial than intentional depravity,"
ſaid Lenox coolly, ſurveying Miſs Mon-
tague.——Neither party ſeeming willing
to lengthen the converſation, Henry
withdrew, and proceeded to Lord Del-
vin's, where he had appointed to meet
the general, on buſineſs reſpecting the
intended nuptials. Bitterly now did he
regret the hour, when, yielding to falſe
appearances, he had offered his hand to
one who never could poſſeſs his heart;—

whilſt Matilda, doubly endeared to him by the recollection of that affection which ſhe once voluntarily owned to feel for him, was now loſt to him for ever.—— Amid this painful retroſpection, he arrived at Lord Delvin's. Important buſineſs of ſtate preventing his Lordſhip from attending to any domeſtic concerns that day, the intended arrangements were poſtponed; and Lady Frances mentioning her intention of viſiting the Comte de B——'s exhibition, Henry offered to attend her: 'Twas here he beheld Matilda. Her ſeeming partiality to Maitland filled his boſom with impetuous tumult, to which he was before a ſtranger. Although he conſidered her loſt to him irretrievably, yet he could not endure to behold her thus unconcernedly offer ſuch diſtinguiſhing marks of predilection

lection for another. It was with difficulty he could assume an appearance of composure during the exhibition; and on conducting Lady Frances home, he apologized for being obliged to leave her immediately, and returned home, where a thousand bewildering reflections racked his mind. He had promised to attend her ladyship to the Grosvenors' route,—and although of all others it was the place which in his present situation he should avoid, an unconquerable impulse determined him to go.

The important evening arrived. Every luxury of the season was purchased;—hot-houses were ransacked.——Festoons of natural flowers breathed fragance around;——and thousands of variegated lamps glittered in rich profusion thro'

the apartments. About ten the company began to aſſemble. Matilda looked enchanting;—her dreſs was ſuperb;—and Sir George, though long unaccuſtomed to join the gay revels of faſhion, in compliment to Lady Groſvenor, was preſent, and ſeemed delighted at the engaging appearance of his lovely niece, whom her ladyſhip was introducing to the Dutcheſs of Barton, when Mrs. Montague entered leaning on the arm of her ſon, and followed by her daughter. As they paſſed up the room, they were met by Matilda, in company with the three blooming daughters of her grace.——"Deareſt "Matilda," ſcreamed Mrs. Montague, in apparent extaſy, "is it poſſible! have "I the happineſs to behold you?—I have "been a thouſand years in town, and "yet, dear, cruel girl, you never have

"come

"come near us." Matilda, in whoſe boſom all reſentment had long died away, anſwered with kindneſs:—not ſo, Sir George;—he was irritated at a behaviour ſo egregiouſly hypocrital:——"Permit "me, madam," ſaid he, "to apologize for "my niece:—ignorance of your return, "could alone prevent her waiting on you "as ſhe never can forget a *friendſhip* ſo "ſingular as *yours*." Mrs. Montague's neck and forehead glowed as the rouge on her cheeks, at the manner in which this addreſs was delivered. Miſs Montague affected to ſmile, and the captain compoſedly hummed '*Speed the plough.*' The dancing commenced. Maitland, who had engaged Matilda for the firſt ſet, exerted all his powers of vivacity to pleaſe, anticipated her wiſhes in every little office of politeneſs, and had her

heart been at liberty, he would have appeared to her highly engaging. The ſet having concluded, he conducted his fair partner to a ſeat, where ſhe was joined by Emily Groſvenor, who had danced with the Earl of Rockville, a nobleman of the viel cour, who ſeemed by his dreſs and affectation of youthful manners extremely careful of concealing the ravages that time had made on his once handſome perſon. "Mort de ma vie! how I "have been peſtered with the old com-"pliments of that modern antique," ſaid Emily. "His lordſhip ſeemed attentive "and polite," anſwered Matilda. "Dear "Mat, could any politeneſs compenſate "for ſuch a bore? Well, (ſtarting up, "and adjuſting her feathers before a "large pier glaſs) if there isn't that con-"ſummate fop Sir Jaſſmine Neville; only

"think

" think of his attaching himſelf all the
" night to a dowdy Iriſh counteſs—but
" he's coming." Here Sir Jaſſmine ap-
proached, and bowing affectedly, " Miſs
" Emily Groſvenor, 'tis an age ſince I had
" the happineſs of ſeeing you." " Poor
" Sir Jaſſmine, how heavily muſt your
" time have paſſed, for I think we met
" two days ago." " But the abſence of
" two days, Miſs Groſvenor, from an
" eſteemed object, is worſe than death."
" Then I hope that, from motives of ſelf-
" preſervation, you are ſeldom abſent
" from your looking-glaſs." " Witty
" as you are lovely," cried Sir Jaſſmine
ironically, " born to delight and capti-
" vate the mind."——" For the capti-
" vity of *his mind* Sir Jaſſmine Neville
" need never entertain much fear," re-
plied Emily)—" Incomparable bril-

 " liancy!"

" liancy!" exclaimed he, walking away. Emily, laughing, turned to Matilda, " Why ſo abſtracted, my dear; are your " thoughts engaged in commiſerating Sir " Jaſſmine?" " No, indeed, Emily; I " was juſt thinking, that the wit which " cannot ſhine without a foil, is ſome- " times a dangerous acquiſition." Here the entrance of Lady Frances, accompanied by Lenox, interrupted the converſation. He was elegantly dreſſed:— never did he appear more faſcinating— more beautiful to the eyes of Matilda; ſhe ſuppreſſed the ſtruggling ſighs that aroſe in her boſom, called to Maitland for a glaſs of lemonade, and received it from him with the utmoſt apparent ſatisfaction.

Lenox ſeated himſelf next to Lady Frances,

Frances, whom he had engaged for the firſt ſet, which being concluded before their entrance, Captain Montague, who had engaged her ladyſhip for an enſuing dance, came up, and Henry was left to himſelf. Matilda, whoſe agitation increaſed, declined the offer of a young nobleman's hand, and Maitland, with Emily Groſvenor, had joined the dancers. When Henry approached, he heſitated for a few moments, as if afraid to ſit down, and in a faltering voice addreſſed Matilda: "Can I intreat—— "I hope, Miſs Oſmington——" "If "you pleaſe, Mr. Lenox," ſaid Matilda, interrupting him, "we will wave all "ſubjects relative to paſt events." "Has Mr. Maitland," ſaid he, colouring, "engaged ſo much attention as to "exclude every other conſideration

" from your mind?" " No, ſir, he " has not made me forget that there is " a Lady Frances Delvin." " Fatal " name," he uttered with a ſuppreſſed tone of voice. Matilda aroſe. " Stay " a little—but a little—" ſaid he, " why " were my letters from Portugal treated " with ſuch contemptuous—ſuch cruel " ſilence?"——Here he was interrupted by Lady Groſvenor, who came to introduce a partner to him, ſuppoſing it was that prevented him from dancing;—he excuſed himſelf—Matilda, in the mean time, departed—and for the remainder of the night he had no opportunity of ſpeaking to her.

CHAP. XV.

La fin couronne de les œuvres.

A numerous party, the following day, were invited to dine at Lord Delvin's, whither the General with Henry were preparing to go, when a meſſage arrived from his lordſhip, requeſting the immediate preſence of the General alone. In about two hours, he returned in viſible agitation, ſeated himſelf, and continued

for ſeveral minutes ſilent. Henry ventured to demand the cauſe of his anxiety; when, to his inexpreſſible joy, he was informed, that Lady Frances had eloped with Captain Montague from Lady Groſvernor's; that her father had not diſcovered their flight until the following morning, when to purſue the fugitives would be too late. Reſpect for his grandfather made Henry conceal his real ſentiments under the maſk of chagrin and diſappointment. The latter, with the utmoſt kindneſs, bade him baniſh from his thoughts one who had proved herſelf ſo unworthy of his affection; that the firſt wiſh of his heart was to ſee him connected with a lady, whoſe merit would render him happy; and that, if he ſhould fix his choice on ſuch a perſon, a ſlight inferiority of rank

ſhould not induce him to withhold his conſent. This Henry conſidered a favourable moment for mentioning his attachment to Matilda: he related his firſt introduction, paſt over ſubſequent circumſtances, only obſerving, that a ſlight miſunderſtanding had taken place at the commencement of his acquaintance with Lady Frances: and that ſhe was now the acknowledged heireſs of her uncle, Sir George Belgrave. The General liſtened to this account with attention, retired early, and at eleven the following morning rung for his carriage, and did not return till near the hour of dinner. Henry knew not to what cauſe he could attribute this unuſual reſervedneſs, but an expreſſion of inward ſatisfaction that was ſpread over the countenance of his grand-

grandfather proved that diſpleaſure was not the cauſe of his taciturnity.

The next morning, having told Henry that he muſt accompany him on important buſineſs, they both departed. Lenox's ſurpriſe was not a little excited, as he read the name, Sir George Belgrave, on the braſs plate on the door at which they ſtopped. The general having inquired of the porter, if his maſter was at home, was anſwered affirmatively; and they proceeded to a drawing-room, where Sir George was confined to his chair by the gout; and beſide him was ſeated, netting, Matilda. She bluſhed deeply as Henry entered. "I have "brought you this delinquent, Sir "George," ſaid the general, "who is "guilty of the enormous offence of admiring

" miring an amiable and lovely young
" lady."—Matilda affected to be ſolely
intent to her work.—Henry's eye kind-
led with joy—and Sir George ſmiled
through his pain. " But what," ſaid the
Baronet, " if there is another who has
" aided and abetted him in his crime."—
" Then as judge, ſoi-diſant," replied the
general, " the ſentence I pronounce is,
" that you, Henry Lenox, and you, Ma-
" tilda Oſmington, for theſe ſaid offen-
" ces, ſhall be married on this day fort-
" night." Matilda's confuſion was ex-
ceſſive. " Indeed I cannot, 'tis too
" ſoon," ſhe replied.—" Then, crimi-
" nal, plead your own cauſe," ſaid Sir
George, riſing by the help of the Ge-
neral's arm, and hobbling to an adjoining
apartment, when Henry was left at li-
berty freely to declare his paſſion for his
adored

adored Matilda. A ſhort explanation ſerved to re-unite the affection of hearts ſo mutually inclined to each other:—— both had yielded to falſe appearances;— and Matilda declaring, that the cauſe of her ſilence to him whilſt in Portugal, proceeded from her never having received his letter, both juſtly concluded that the cauſe muſt have originated in Mrs. Montague's family.

The General, ſuppoſing that Henry's affection for Matilda was ſuppreſſed by motives of duty, immediately waited on Sir George:——each was pleaſed with the conditions of the other; and Matilda was informed by her uncle of the propoſals he had received.

The receipt of this intelligence, at a time

time when ſhe ſuppoſed Lenox on the verge of pledging himſelf for ever to another, aſtoniſhed her. She replied, that ſhe was not deſirous to change her ſtate: ——that to adminiſter relief to him,——to wait on him—was her greateſt wiſh. Theſe negative objections were over-ruled by Sir George, who gained her baſhful permiſſion to receive the viſit of Henry.

She could not withhold her conſent from the ſolicitation of the only object of her early love; and, in a fortnight after, his happineſs was completed, by bleſſing him with the hand of his adored Matilda.

Lady Frances Montague, and her cara ſpoſo, having obtained the forgive-

neſs

neſs of Lord Delvin, returned to London, where, for two long months, they lived in the moſt concordant harmony. A miſunderſtanding ſoon after took place, which was followed by mutual diſguſt;—and if the moſt cordial hatred and breach of pledged vows were neceſſary conſtituents for a married couple of ton, few could diſpute their claims.

Mrs. Danvers, after fluttering through a gilded ſcene of ſplendid iniquity, died a martyr to diſeaſe and the tortures of a guilty conſcience.

Thus, we ſee, that virtue alone is the baſis of all terreſtrial happineſs;——and, that even ſhould the children of innocence and piety ſuffer from the ſpecious plauſibility of fraud, or the cankering tooth

tooth of envy, ſtill a ſure, though late reward awaits them, in thoſe manſions where Vice dares not raiſe his livid head, nor 'Offence's gilded hand ſhove by Juſtice.'

THE END.